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MODERN COMPOSERS

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IGOR STRAVINSKY

MODERN COMPOSERS

BY

GUIDO PANNAIN

TRANSLATED WITH A NOTE BY

MICHAEL R. BONAVIA

ILLUSTRATED WITH 8 PORTRAITS

5804

NEW YORK

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book is a survey of modern music which has an immediate practical value to the reader who is anxious to grasp the salient points of the important contemporary composers. It has also a second purpose, which is harder to define, since there is a fundamental disparity between the Continental viewpoint and the English; a disparity exemplified by the fact that the Italian word *estetica*, which comprises the scope of the book, is not susceptible of exact translation. It means a study of the artistic background, of the state of mind which precedes the act of creation. In this work each composer is considered in the light of his own individual characteristics, and also in relation to a larger scheme —the whole trend of modern music. He is thus, as it were, fitted into his place in a frame of constantly developing ideas.

A well-known English critic has recently deplored the fact that there is no such thing as a positive critical method, no sign of the growth of a 'scientific' criticism. The complaint is, of course, not a new one; the oldest jibe thrown at critics, and especially at music critics, is that they never codify their judgments into a system; so that in the end their writings remain as empiric, as founded upon purely personal reactions, as in the beginning.

On the Continent, however, where schools and cliques of artists form new artistic theories with a facility and rapidity unknown in this country, the critic is bound to relate any new manifestation in art to existing schools of thought, an artist being considered no more for his individual merits than for those of the technique or theory he represents. A critic is thus compelled to

make an investigation after some accepted method; and the tools of any such investigation must be largely psychological. Signor Pannain's employment of these tools has not, however, led him away from his proper thesis, which is to illumine the work of the composers he discusses from a practical as well as a philosophical standpoint. The book is neither an encyclopædia nor an abstract treatise. Its method varies with each subject, but the sum of its conclusions is definite and the work is an organic whole. The author's outlook gives him standards as well as a standpoint of his own, so that his judgments are something more than a record of subjective sensations. He thus approaches measurably nearer than most critics to that system of thought and criticism whose absence has been lamented.

The difficulty of translation from Italian is mainly comprised by the flexibility of the original, its rapid and dramatic changes of pace and rhythm. Italian can be as curt as Latin, or as ponderous as German. The translator hopes that his sins will be found to be rather those of omission than of commission. It has often been thought better to omit what was a subtle metaphor in the original than to risk obscurity in the translation; for many Italian words have pictorial implications which cloud rather than illumine the argument if a translator attempts to capture the full flavour of the original. No omissions of importance have been made except with the author's consent.

Facing each chapter will be found a biographical summary, and a list of principal compositions with dates and opus numbers, where available, which it is hoped will prove of some practical value. There is also an index.

The proofs have been read by Mr. Richard Capell, who has made many alterations and corrections, and to whose kindness the translator is very greatly indebted.

M. R. B.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Translator's Note	v
Changing Values in Modern Music	1
Richard Strauss	17
Igor Stravinsky	35
Manuel de Falla	57
Paul Hindemith	75
Zoltán Kodály	95
Arnold Schönberg	107
Karol Szymanowski	127
Maurice Ravel	143
Ralph Vaughan Williams	165
Ferruccio Busoni	187
Ernest Bloch	205
Arthur Honegger	223
A Survey of American Music	239
Index	253

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Igor Stravinsky	*frontispiece*	
Richard Strauss	*facing page*	18
Paul Hindemith	,,	76
Zoltán Kodály	,,	96
Arnold Schönberg	,,	108
Maurice Ravel	,,	142
Ralph Vaughan Williams	,,	164
Arthur Honegger	,,	222

CHANGING VALUES IN MODERN MUSIC

By the end of the last century contemporary music had begun to lose touch with popular taste. New composers were looked at askance, or (worse still) with quiet indifference. Music seemed to be finally estranged from Society—from Society which throughout the whole romantic period had always showed artistic sensibility.

Romanticism had produced a tremendous urge toward artistic rivalry, and from the stress of these opposing movements were born fresh tendencies in music—tendencies which the entire world of culture and society had helped to originate.

But with the arrival of the new century the bulk of the educated public seemed to have lost all artistic enthusiasm, and to have retired into the shell of a suspicious indifference. Theatres and concert-rooms grew chillier and emptier; the newspapers no longer published lengthy reports of artistic novelties—spectacular failures and successes were alike absent from the day's news. Music became the prey of isolated cliques whose musical taste was intellectual rather than intuitive. A new conception of æsthetic values grew up, whose exponents claimed a scientific method; and its appearance marked the separation of popular sentiment and musical progress. It was an objective conception, the essence of which lay in the technical appreciation of music as a detached combination of sounds—not as an expression of emotional experience.

One marked characteristic will suffice to define the standpoint of the new musicians: their repugnance to being thought emotional. The keynote of their doctrine

is the claim to be cured of the *mal de siècle*, the repudiation of art's mission as the symbol of an inner life of the emotions. And in this desire to free themselves at any cost from subjection to romantic ideals they have committed the enormous error of believing that all interior vision, all the richness of the human fancy, were arbitrary concepts exploited by romanticism for its own ends.

A disturbance can be traced in the method of contemporary artistic expression, which transcends the specific problems of art and touches the whole social system. Many ideals were plucked from the grasp of their devotees and others took their place—ideals which at first seemed hardly worthy of such devotion. In the new doctrines an uncertainty of perception, a wavering between theory and practice, a difficulty in the true valuation of the emotional faculty can be traced—as though sensibility was a defect, and an obstacle in the way of expression!

It is only natural that criticism, as the mirror of artistic creation reflected by general culture, was unable to avoid an equally abrupt *volte-face*. Musical theory has never been renowned for solidity and logic: to-day, in some ways, it seems to be no legitimate creation of human thought, but a mere intellectual 'metaphor', a symbol of a lyrical force which is impotent to express itself directly: the musical critic is a lonely knight-errant to whom no one pays any attention in this world of æsthetic lost causes.

The most depressing fact about modern musical literature is that while historical and technical criticism is daily enriching knowledge and casting light on countless unknown aspects of music, the 'criticism of culture' —the study of æsthetics—is in a state of chaos. 'Naturalism' and 'idealism' are jumbled together in a curious heap of literary contexts, which so confound

the issue that the *objective* phenomenon of music never makes properly clear its position in the *subjective* function of artistic creation. An analogous situation exists among the dramatic critics of to-day, who, defeated by the multiform and fragmentary types of artistic perception which beset them, have never decided on a definition of the character of the drama, which has still no true canons, whether of pure thought or of pure art.

This appalling multiplicity of æsthetic tendencies, rich in contradictions—from neo-classicism to neo-objectivism or the aggressive super-subjectivity of the expressionists—all this denotes the existence of movements in art which seek to elucidate their position by means of their own personal sensibility, and through a purely theoretical exposition, while lacking a system or a style of their own. They are really contrasts of 'cultural' suggestions, together with quasi-literary ideas of sensibility (whose origin lay in a critical outlook yet whose motive power is largely lyrical). This uncertainty of direction is a result of the spiritual and intellectual disorder resulting from the war.

It is essentially these wild eddies in the current of intellectual and social life that give the musical sensibilities of to-day their peculiar tone. The growing shoots of a new idiom are torn between the traditional power of past development and the wild urge of the present to chase its own tail. The classical conceptions, with their cool, well-balanced ideals of form, are held in respect: romanticism still burns with an infectious ardour; the realities of present strife deafen with their mechanical clamour. The intellectual and emotional nerves of the century of romanticism have been stretched until they are like taut wires: and yet this outburst of sheer physical energy has been unable to conquer the new sensualism of the intellect

which had already overwhelmed literature by the end of the nineteenth century.

Not even the mental athleticism engendered by the war's physical athleticism was able to destroy the erotic and sensual æstheticism of the decadents in literature. The 'sporting' movement in art (as it can almost be called) made little headway—a few mediocre novels and symphonies were its sole product.

The æsthetic sensuality of the age was too well founded on time-honoured principles to be diverted by games of football or motor races; the athletic movement was a mere by-product of the war, whilst æstheticism was a long, slow, and momentous spiritual reaction from the bread-and-butter materialism of the nineteenth century. And Liberalism had scarcely seated the bourgeoisie in its new and comfortable quarters when the Fourth Estate appeared with the mechanized structure of society and the modern problems of the distribution of wealth. Economic theory began to cloud the purity of human thought: the conception of the soul was obliterated by the ideology of the stomach. With his mind still agitated by the ardours of romanticism, man was suspended in an intellectual void, face to face with the brutal realities of science and matter: and a spiritual nausea seized him. It was a bewilderment similar to that which afflicted the contemporaries of Rossini, yet with a notable difference. The sensuality of the earlier age was stable, almost patriarchal; there was a harmonic unity of life which only sought to reconstruct itself in tranquil contentment. Reactionary forces had unseated the French Revolution, and the bourgeoisie were walking in Arcady: the eighteenth century's tradition of musical lyricism was reborn, nourished with the good red blood of Rossini and all that he stood for.

And while, as had happened a century earlier, humanity after the Great War felt the need of peace

and self-restoration, it found then no roots of serenity in the past to which it could attach a new growth, but only pessimism and decadence, from which it fled without learning how to create a new lyrical basis for self-expression.

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The sensual impressionism of French music had been (like D'Annunzio in Italy) a reaction to a materialistic, almost socialistic, trend of thought. Democracy had been torn between the material and the spiritual life until it was reduced to a level of 'golden mediocrity'. The scientific world, with its philosophic doctors and its evolutionists measuring to a hairbreadth the marks of apish ancestry in man—all this is repellent to the artist's nature, as repellent as the world of active politics, with its hypocrisies and its crimes against the spirit.

Thus the sensual nature of thinking man, detached from any control by true belief or morality, is bounded only by the interstellar space of a poet's vision. Impressionism is not a mere mysticism of the senses: it is a state of mind in which reality seems as unsubstantial as music played by unseen performers. And nothing is ever so intoxicatingly desirable as when it is physically unattainable, when the appetite can never be appeased. Impressionism is thus at once a diseased and a transfigured state of mind, both cultured and primitive, artificial and instinctive—a sensuality which holds its stylized words and sounds suspended in a warm and intoxicating atmosphere.

Musicians, under these influences, turned to the East, and fell under that curious fascination which the Slav soul often exercises. The fresh vigour of those heady popular songs can be as powerful as the song of the Sirens to Ulysses: Claude Debussy, when he returned from Russia, was quite intoxicated with their

indefinable flavour, in which the whole spirit of a nation is summed up. And so composers began to use harmonies like the colours on a palette, exemplifying what Baudelaire had described in the mid-nineteenth century:

> This great symphony of to-day, which is the eternal variation on the symphonies of yesterday, this stream of melodies whose variety is infinite in the past and the future—all this vast pæan is called truly colour—colour in harmony, in melody, and in counterpoint. Harmony is the basis of every theory of colour: and melody is the unification of colour.

Baudelaire was writing of plastic art, yet his words seem to be the words of a musician, and what he says applies also to music. The true study of æsthetics does not permit technical terms to be confined to any one art, for the only thing which matters is the 'unity of impression' which absorbs, reconstructs, and gives sanction to artistic terminology.

The first tendency of the new mode of expression in music led towards the destruction of the octave's harmonic unity, and since this unity was irrevocably linked to the relation of semitones, the modern harmonic system tended to destroy the significance of the semitone. In the sixteenth century chromaticism, with the appearance of tonal experiments between one stage and another of the hexachordal order, began to awaken a dormant harmonic sense and favoured the development of new tonalities. In the eighteenth century the identical procedure began the break-up of the semitonal interrelation, and the final disruption of the octave's unity —a retrograde path which retraced the steps laboriously taken three centuries earlier. The madrigals of the Prince of Venosa and Wagner's *Tristan* are each the goal of a long pilgrimage—the first being the last instance of liturgical harmony, the latter the apotheosis of romantic harmony.

An epidemic of folk-song, from Moussorgsky to Grieg, followed. Max Reger exhausted himself in a frenzy of chromaticism; the post-romantics went up in the smoke of their own rhetoric. But Debussy is still the true interpreter of the new tonal consciousness; he has the key to the magic door of the twentieth century. Baudelaire's words proved to have been prophetic. Debussy's music is an impression in colour—a tonal palette—'the great symphony of to-day which is the eternal variation on the symphonies of yesterday'.

The ethereal figures of his *Pelléas et Mélisande* move through the delicious vapours of a dream—a dream which was broken by the roar of guns. The world to which they sang was shattered in 1914.

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The war mobilized minds as well as bodies. And after the war minds might be demobilized, but bodies remained at attention, their muscles taut. One would have imagined that the physical heroism of the war was about to breed a race of athletes, from the popular rage for sport and contests of every description. The capacity for physical pleasure was no longer dissipated through the gratification of the senses but was heightened by the new cult of exercise.

Between the traditional sensuality of a decadent literature and this new sensuality of the knock-out punch or of the brilliantly scored goal, inherited from the war-time spirit, a conflict grew up which stands, not for the birth-pangs of a new mode of life and thought, but for the great question-mark which is the emblem of contemporary life.

This new growth has been chiefly at the expense of art, as regards its creative energy, and of the artist, as regards his function in the social scale. Modern taste reflects all the contradictions and uncertainties of

post-war life—a life which was nourished on the sweat and tears of the war, which frets itself away in a thirst for enjoyment and a glorification of athletic contests, in worshipping strife for its own sake. Humanity, deprived of the best years of its youth, remains undecided between the old ideals which it cannot re-create, and its own vague desire to find its destined paths into the future.

Art has so far succeeded only in creating a new form which is torn by internal dissension. The infectious delights of impressionism have already proved to be a form of intellectual debility. It was the reaction from impressionism which finally gave the signal to join the new battle; and then came the heyday of wild manifestoes and theories—the tangled cult of dissonance in music linked to a weird angularity of form—a new *naïveté* which was given a malicious point only by its super-subtle harmonies—the vagaries of high-sounding new movements that never progress beyond the stage of good intentions. And after Debussy (which is as much as to say after the war) there began the real conflict, the real point of division in contemporary taste. The stronger movement led towards a renewal of life in lyricism, towards a precise and strong idiom of expression.

But the realization of this tendency led away from its original principles: and herein lies the real tragedy of all modern 'encyclopædism'. We have been masters of our own realm of knowledge too long; we are sated with easy learning. Tradition, it is true, moves us; it has become at last a real faith, but it is not yet the very stuff of life. The inheritance of ideals has been corrupted by the higher criticism; in our hands every spontaneous emotion becomes material for academic theorizing.

And in the forms of modern music there is reflected all the self-contradiction of the century that has pro-

duced it—a century that is eager and shrinking, rich in tradition, hampered by literary associations, ascetic and voluptuary, touched with heroism and with incredible degradation, with faith and atheism at once. The generation of the war reached the summit of heroism; the generation of the peace hastened to settle into a life of petty security. We can feel the beauty and strength of the earlier heroic *naïveté* without realizing that it cannot spontaneously reproduce itself in us. We are exhausted by emotional experience, and worn down by a mechanical age, and an intellectual exhaustion which disorganizes the practice and theory of art. Artistic thought does not dominate the rough reality, but is subjugate to it; through its capacity to feel and understand it is uplifted or debased.

On the one hand we have expressionism, with its conception of the state of mind considered as a supreme and final act of the spiritual existence: on the other, the scientific objectivism, which considers music *in re*, in its physical reality, solely as so many sounds in such-and-such an order. And in each case the new æsthetic tendencies agree in ignoring the importance of tradition.

The expressionist theory reduces itself, in substance, to an insistence upon the liberation of all that is derivative and conventional from its bondage to the past, a renewal of the present limits and canons of expression.[1] The creative state of mind is thus 'discovered' to be independent of all past experience: it is arbitrary and self-sufficient. In short, it is ugly, ill-tempered, and rebellious. Tradition, as far as the work of creation goes, is merely a bundle of rubbish. The work of art must radiate its own quality spontaneously, without reference to its heritage or surroundings. There is no other source of inspiration except the subjective one,

[1] A. Schering, *Die expressionistische Bewegung in der Musik. Beitrag zur Einführung in die Kunst der Gegenwart* (Leipzig, Seemann, 1920).

which, uprooted from the natural soil of experience, must wander forlornly in the chilly spaces of the upper ether.

The melody of the expressionist school of musicians is metaphysical; that is to say, it is intended to be a summing up of the desire of humanity to search into the roots of its own existence, the eternal whys and wherefores that beset man through the ages. Naturally such music needs to use weird and wonderful intervals; it must contain harsh, angular outlines as rasping as a saw-tooth. Regular tonality is abolished—it does not, cannot exist in company with the new outlook, for which there is nothing real but the myriad unrelated sounds of music, as impalpable as star-dust — and as irrationally fascinating.

The need to create a fresh psychological basis for expressionism not unnaturally culminated in a reaction towards romanticism. And expressionism is essentially a romantic phenomenon, although it abhors traditional romanticism and abjures its methods and forms. In its curious incapacity to conceive of artistic history as a harmonious and natural spiritual development, expressionism ends by exposing the artificial and academic nature of its own rootless theories.

On the other hand the objective and scientific attitude towards music is tainted with mechanistic realism. Its best exponent is probably Paul Bekker,[1] who engages romanticism in single combat. Once he has decided upon his premises, he continues with an admirable rigidity in his logic and with an inflexible scientific method. It is unfortunate, therefore, that his premises are totally inaccurate. His theory of music from the objective point of view, as an audible phenomenon quite apart from any æsthetic scale of values (since music as perceived by the senses is an abstraction quite

[1] Paul Bekker, *Organische und mechanische Musik* (Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1928).

apart from the transmission of a spiritual message), is, frankly, nonsense. One cannot wonder if, following this line of thought, music appears to Bekker as a purely mathematical problem and if it recalls irresistibly the moves of the pieces on a chess-board. The comparison need not seem far-fetched: for if once music is fixed in the concept of reality as an isolated phenomenon, then Bekker's theory is logically water-tight, and its final stage is to regard music as something very little removed from a game of chess. Expression, according to him, is one thing, and music another. Admittedly music and expression work well hand in hand (which was the secret of romantic theory), but it is not necessary that music, to establish its concrete reality, should identify itself with expression. Expression is concerned with emotional factors: not with music, which is an organic structure of sound *per se*. Bekker is armed with tape-measure and pressure-gauge as if he were an engineer; he is cold-blooded, a scientist to the marrow of his bones. His organic objectivism is even more whole-hearted than the neo-objectivism which Strobel has derived from pictorial art's latest theories and (not very skilfully) applied to musical terminology.[1]

The pickaxe of the anti-romantics has already started to pull down the venerable edifice of tradition. The very elementary conception of harmony which distinguishes between concord and dissonance, between pleasing and displeasing combinations of notes, has been sent packing to the rubbish-heap of all sentiment; of all that weak, nonsensical, tearful, deformed, and hysterical work which for so long disfigured the organic reality of musical phenomena. The same fate has overtaken the sonata form, the form *par excellence*, the mausoleum of the schools, a result of the pseudo-musical

[1] Heinrich Strobel, *Die neue Sachlichkeit in Anbruch* (1926), p. 254 et seq.

mind of the romantics, with its thematic dualism that was so obviously and lamentably the offspring of false sentiment.

Emotion is, in fact, a bugbear to the new school of musicians, who are intent on visualizing music as a field of purely acoustic experiment, where the infinitely varied range of possible sound-combinations should be worked out by the serious artist. It is only through the purely physical channels that the induction of pleasure in the listener can be regarded as legitimate. Until recently the sentimental side (in the best sense of the term) has dictated the form of a work: it is now the task of the form to dictate the sentiment.

After all, the world of to-day hums with machinery; and why should not the mechanical principle, which has conquered space and time, extend itself even to music? Man, who tries to be lord of the machines, must inevitably become a machine himself. And the realists have calculated to the *n*th degree the human capacity for and response to spiritual exaltation as precisely as though measuring the fuel consumption of a new motor. Some people rejoice in this new tendency in art, others lament it and long for the return of saner views: but it is certain that those who proclaim it are truly orthodox: they are only diagnosing the new *mal de siècle*.

Under such conditions one can see in its proper perspective [1] the danger of a music whose lines are mapped out in advance. The nineteenth century lifted music to the highest spheres of divine inspiration, the twentieth brought it to earth again. The mechanical spirit which dominates modern life is eating into all sentiment, and even music is pervaded with realism. There is no place for lyricism amid the clamour of these raucous voices. The very structure of modern

[1] Adolf Weissmann, *Die Entgötterung der Musik* (Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1928).

society, democratic and plutocratic at once, has awoken a 'business' outlook among musicians. The artist looks towards America as to the financial end of his ambition, for there the plutocracy that has supplanted the old conception of autocracy has also taken its place as a patron of the arts. He is ranged alongside the other parts of the great economic machine of society whose roots lie in work and the distribution of wealth. And so has arisen the artist as a *type*, a definite social class, and, above all, as the representative of that class, the artist who dominates it on the stage and concert platform—the conductor of the orchestra. Toscanini to-day is as important as a hundred Malibrans a century ago.

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The critics of to-day are essentially reporters. Their outlook on life and art is ready-made; they look down from the office-windows of great newspapers indifferent to anything that is not 'modern' or 'news', food for the greedy imagination of the uneducated public. They are looking out for facts—easily comprehensible facts. As for artistic history, it has become a vulgar scramble in which those whose mission should be to discover the truth merely indulge their personal predilections to the exclusion of everything else. If any one succeeds in lifting himself above the petty squabble he falls a prey to one of the other artistic vices—expressionism, or the mock-scientific fad of mechanical objectivism, or into a mere elegant empiricism whose exponents, from Weissmann (whose observations are, to do them justice, frequently penetrating) downwards, revolve in a mad whirl of pseudo-æsthetic terminology. Whoever escapes madness, in a mad world, is seized in the harder grip of melancholy, the hypochondria of the spirit. On the one hand can be heard the battle-cry

of those who proclaim the death of sentiment in art, and the progress towards an age that shall be scientific in every branch of thought: on the other, the calls for a deliverer, for a St. George to kill the clockwork bogy of mechanized art.

There is a confusion of mere terminology with reality which lies at the heart of most modern criticism. The machine is confounded with the mechanical principle, and the decadence which comes from a general tendency to spiritual barrenness with a totally different movement, a birth of new thought and expression in the minds of men. There should not really exist this confusion between the spirit of art and the spirit of, say, machinery, for both are functions of the human will. And the mechanism which is everywhere triumphant to-day is a victory of the human will, a new movement of the conquering, suffering intelligence of man. That the mere mechanical realities should utterly dominate the spiritual aspect is an aberration, a kink in growth which must disappear. In art similarly the rhetoric of to-day is the result of a kink in the natural line of growth, which results in a blind blundering forward instead of a regular march.

Yet these disturbing factors are no more than deviations from the straight line of human progress; and even if the rhythm of life is interrupted for a time, nevertheless the broad lines of progress are not necessarily obliterated. Sooner or later progress will return to its true course; and then many will imagine that it is losing, instead of finding anew, its best guide.

After the artistic triumphs of the nineteenth century human energy and thought were exhausted for a while. It seemed as though the World War must infallibly give the *coup de grâce*; and yet this did not happen. Instead, the shock ended the paralysis which had spread over will-power and fancy alike. The condition of

art was bad enough: it was bled white by erotic stimuli, torn by different lyrical ideals; like Antæus, it had to fall to earth in order to find the strength to fly once more. And this strength it found in the expansion of its energies forcibly brought about by the war; by the need to measure its strength against the elements, to express concretely its ideas and constructive powers. Human intelligence, caught when on the point of fainting in the oppressive atmosphere of rival artistic theories, was revived by the need to measure itself with the stern realities of war. A new tempering of minds arose. And from this new lease of life human thought gave birth to a new vision of mechanism.

It is ludicrous to assert, as some do, that mechanism can dominate human thought, for human thought has conceived and brought to birth the machine in all its aspects. It is a sign of power, not of weakness, that we undertake these perilous voyages into the unknown. In the moment of victory the human intelligence resumes once more the thread of human continuity in adventure, the thread which has no end and no beginning.

And music is a vital, an essential fragment of that history. It is ridiculous to attempt to isolate it as a phenomenon. In this first quarter of the twentieth century it has clearly reflected a consciousness of reality about to define itself anew. And it has built up for itself a life of adaptation and mimicry, scintillating with genial lightnings, trembling with aspirations and violent contrasts, bent back like the steel bow only to spring into shape again. At times can be seen fragments of exterior reality, and it has been said that the destiny of music as an art would be decided by these, on scientifically accurate principles. But to lay down laws for the future course of musical development is absurd; not only absurd, but impossible. All is on the knees of the gods.

If we imagine that mechanism as such can fight against its own creator, the human intelligence, we have reached a vicious circle of the most patent absurdity. But what we should hope for, and watch for, and pray for, is that the same virtues of initiative and inspiration which have created the mechanized world of to-day shall infuse themselves into art once more, and above all into music which so sorely needs them.

RICHARD STRAUSS

Born Munich, 11 June 1864. Son of a Munich horn-player. Pupil of Benno Walter (violin) and of the Court Kapellmeister, F. W. Meyer, in Munich. In 1885 became Court Musical Director at Meiningen; in 1886 held the post of Third Kapellmeister at Munich; in 1889 of Court Conductor at Weimar; in 1894 Court Conductor at Munich; and a few months later the same post at Berlin. In 1908 became director of a composition class at the Royal High School for Music, Berlin; from 1919–24 was Director of the Vienna State Opera. Married, in 1894, the singer, Pauline de Ahna.

Principal Compositions

Op. 16. *Aus Italien* ('From Italy'). Symphony. 1886.
,, 20. *Don Juan.* Symphonic poem for orchestra. 1889.
,, 23. *Macbeth.* Symphonic poem for orchestra. Revised version, 1891.
,, 24. *Tod und Verklärung* ('Death and Transfiguration'). Symphonic poem for orchestra. 1890.
,, 25. *Guntram.* Opera, first produced Weimar, 1894.
,, 28. *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* ('Till's Merry Pranks'). Symphonic poem for orchestra, 1895.
,, 30. *Also sprach Zarathustra* ('Thus spake Zarathustra'). Symphonic poem for orchestra. 1896.
,, 35. *Don Quixote.* Symphonic poem for orchestra. 1898.
,, 40. *Ein Heldenleben* ('A Hero's Life'). Symphonic poem for orchestra. 1899.
,, 50. *Feuersnot* ('Trial by Fire'). Opera, first produced Dresden, 1901.
,, 53. *Sinfonia Domestica* ('Domestic Symphony'). In F major. 1904.
,, 54. *Salomé.* Opera in one act on text by Oscar Wilde. Produced Dresden, 1906.
,, 58. *Elektra.* Opera with text after Sophocles, by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Produced Dresden, 1909.
,, 59. *Der Rosenkavalier* ('The Knight of the Rose'). Opera with text by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Produced Dresden, 1911.

Herm. Leiser, Berlin

LIBRARY

RICHARD STRAUSS

Op. 60. *Ariadne auf Naxos* ('Ariadne in Naxos'). Interlude to Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. First produced at Stuttgart in 1912; new arrangement, Dresden, 1917.

„ 64. *Eine Alpensinfonie* ('Alpine Symphony'). 1915.

„ 65. *Die Frau ohne Schatten* ('The Woman without a Shadow'). Opera. Produced Vienna, 1919.

„ 70. *Schlagobers* ('Whipped Cream'). Ballet. Produced Vienna, 1924.

„ 75. *Die aegyptische Helena* ('The Egyptian Helen'). Opera. Produced Dresden, 1928.

Many songs which have become part of the permanent repertoire of German *lieder*.

RICHARD STRAUSS

To discuss Richard Strauss is to put on its trial the artistic taste of the European middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century—the comfortable *bourgeoisie* of business, full of common sense and utilitarian energy, but poor in spiritual qualities: the class which since the middle of the century had dominated ordinary society and coloured the whole economic and political existence of Europe.

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In the eighteenth century art had enjoyed a special position. The aristocracy possessed an æsthetic consciousness which inhered in that life of glittering social façades and refined sensibilities. The artist might easily be a man of undistinguished birth, and yet win his way to sit beside the nobleman. Those gilded and mirror'd salons, iridescent with light and jewellery, comprised the true rhythm of his life. The aristocracy were the hungry whom the artist furnished with spiritual food. But romanticism was already simmering in the pot. The victory of thought over form was a direct consequence of the change which spread over high society after the French Revolution. The middle classes acquired an imperial predominance. After they had won military superiority they turned their attention to altering the social structure.

With the progress of industrial penetration there came a weakening in the imaginative and creative realm. The nodal point of society became economic —the struggle between hand labour and machinery.

Business—mere commercial transaction—became an end and a philosophy in itself, with the development of the Stock Exchange system. 'The people' now meant only the body of workpeople, mechanized in their work and their outlook alike, and around whose philosophical life even socialism drew a limit-line of mere animal function. The capitalist bourgeoisie prospered; its march to power was given its tempo by the growth of the limited company. Life rested upon a basis which was essentially utilitarian. The day's work was no longer one of creation, but merely of taking stock, of recording the work of the machines.

This economic view of life, once it had become a fundamental part of human thought, was naturally reflected on the political stage. Parliament became the haunt of rival vested interests; and the government of the commonwealth the controlling factor that disciplines and adjusts the relations of these interests. Thus the lawyer, the advocate whose knowledge holds the balance of these powers, comes first into prominence, and then into predominance, on the political scene. But the lawyer is essentially a bourgeois figure; and this in some measure explains the reason why the bourgeoisie hold the key to the governance of every modern State.

Such artistic sensibility as the bourgeoisie possess, with its roots in a business outlook, cannot but be very limited, and tends to the study of technique from an objective standpoint.

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The virtuoso was, in his heyday, the real interpreter of the romantic spirit—it was he, more than any other, who linked the composer to the audience. His bravura displays of technique were in themselves a motive power which pushed the imagination of the composer toward loftier romantic realms than it would otherwise

have attained. But it must be admitted that the virtuoso's extravagant gestures and picturesque attitudes were often not the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual exaltation, but were empty flourishes devoid of emotional significance. In the second half of the nineteenth century virtuosity, however, lost even the romantic justification for its existence, and became a mere empty shell of convention.

The most admired of all virtuosi is, and has always been, the orator. And in a democracy the orator takes the place which in a romantic epoch was filled by the musical virtuoso. He is a soloist—his instrument human speech. In the law courts, at every public function from a funeral to a Bank Holiday or an election, it is the public orator who plays upon the feelings of his audience, driving them to heights which they would never attain by themselves—in precisely the same way as the old musical virtuosi drove the romantic fancy to higher and higher peaks of exaltation.

The place of rhetoric in human affairs is no less than in art. The orator shapes and gives character to the vague sentiment of a crowd; the virtuoso in art shapes it to a rhetorical form, and stamps it with a peculiar character. Either case represents the triumph of the executant, the interpreter, over the creator. The thought is finally dominated by him who can express it, and not by him in whose brain it was first dimly shaped.

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From this conflicting mass of tendencies in art we can disentangle the figure of Richard Strauss. It is he who, more than any other, represents the virtuoso as composer, the successor to the great virtuosi of a former age. His is the glory of creating a style of symphonic rhetoric in the grand manner. From Liszt, from Brahms, from Wagner, he draws those elements which are necessary

to stimulate the flow of his oratory as the preacher selects a text and improvises upon it. He stylizes the forms of progress in thought: that is to say, artistic creation resolves itself, for him, into a reaction to external musical stimulus. The secret of his success lies in the deft handling of material. It is in this respect that Riemann has neatly defined him: 'beherrscht mit seltener Meisterschaft das Kolorit und die Instrumentation'.

Strauss made one attempt to find a personal musical idiom for himself when, in his youth, he followed in the footsteps of Brahms. The results were not very happy; the early sonatas for pianoforte, and piano and violin, were empty and pretentious. A mind essentially devoid of originality cannot create music without external stimulus, any more than it can write great poetry or paint great pictures. And Strauss is part of a culture and a society incapable of producing or understanding any art reduced to its simplest terms. He and the artists of his epoch need forms and conventions as striking as an electric sky-sign; they create a richly coloured tone-picture full of every device which technique can supply and which, if it is accused of spiritual emptiness, can point to a wealth of material imagery.

In Strauss's personal idiom the power and splendour of musical technique end by dominating all other elements. He is a dictator of the instruments, the orator who calls forth their subtlest and most secret powers—the crowned king of the hidden regions of the orchestra. And yet over the whole scene there hangs a hint of stage thunder, the crude colours of a chromolithograph. Strauss is chief among 'theatrical', as opposed to 'operatic', musicians.

Another composer, when he had realized where his spiritual home lay, might have abandoned symphonic writing for the stage. But Strauss is saturated with musical experience; his instincts impel him with

irresistible force towards the symphonic form. The German musical tradition, from Mozart onwards, simmers in his head, and draws him irresistibly towards one form alone.

Between music and drama Strauss has never been able to draw a clear line of demarcation: he is too confirmed a musician to turn his back on his heritage; as an artist he is too weak to create an original work underived from previous schools and individuals. And thus his work never falls instinctively into the true rhythm of the musical idea behind it, but reflects jerkily the passage of various concepts through his brain.

Tradition, in Strauss's music, lives in a state of logical but inert mechanism: upon this frame the ideas of to-day stamp themselves only in a dramatic or melodramatic form. The result is a monstrous union rich in every quality except that of clarity. On the operatic stage Strauss is incapable of realizing either the Wagnerian music-drama or the old conception of opera; and on the concert platform he cannot create in the classic symphonic form. All that is left is the rhetorical medium *par excellence*—the symphonic poem. In this intellectually unsatisfactory compromise Strauss has specialized.

One often hears it said that Strauss is the successor of Liszt. The narrative and descriptive nature of his music does undoubtedly justify a hasty recollection of Liszt's onomatopœic style and Berlioz's scheme of 'programme music'; but it does not excuse the fundamental error of linking the poetic-symphonic idiom of Strauss with that of Liszt or Berlioz.

'Programme music', in its original shape, never loses its essentially musical basis of thought, and it reacts only to needs which are at bottom those of all romantic imagery. Imagination—the concept of exterior things—becomes so vivid that it permeates the mind of the

composer with the reality of its conception, and thus permeates his music. Thus the music becomes to some extent a function of the imaginative faculty, but it never loses its natural rhythm, as marked as the natural rhythm of speech or thought. Musical and dramatic imagery must retain an equipoise—as in Berlioz, and more than in Liszt.

And yet, notwithstanding his literary inferiority to Strauss, Liszt has one advantage over him: he is an authentic interpreter of the soul and the forms of contemporary romantic feeling. Strauss, on the other hand, is constrained to resuscitate a symphonic form which is no more than an adaptation, a stylistic compromise, or formal equilibrium, in order to counteract the inherent disequilibrium in Strauss's musical nature. In the Liszt symphonic poems the imaginative poverty is proportionate to the mediocrity of the result, but, nevertheless, the balance of thought and expression is obvious and intelligible. In Strauss's works there is an unconquerable disproportion between musical and dramatic sense. The striking, and indeed magnificent power of his technical equipment remains an isolated factor, without power to restore the lost balance. His need of expression is a whirlpool in which the varied currents never mingle, and the musical essence of the work is precipitated like a sediment to the bottom.

The symphonic poems of Richard Strauss are pages in a book of pictures. The music is not their essential part—it is rather the illustration to a poem—a poem whose words are missing. The musician has in front of his eyes the idea which is swelling in his imagination, but his eyes are not those of the spirit, they are the eyes of experience—romantic, realist, polyphonic, and symphonic. The substance of what he sees is unreal, for his technique of thought cannot assimilate reality into itself: it remains abstract and academic.

He roughly sketches in sound the elements of his ideas, and builds up a style full of second-hand metaphors which drags its weary length along, incapable of real life or reproduction. The image which he endeavours to bring before one is crystallized into a theme of inferior quality—and the ornamental harmonic growths which surround it are not spontaneous products, but a hot-house cultivation.

Strauss's creative talents give him merely the use of a mental camera, like a painter who tries to capture the spirit, and yet only reproduces the external shape of what he sees. His pictorial imagination is not one which can be transmuted into music; it merely reduces his work to a crude imitation of reality. One thing alone remains in his music which is worth considering in detail: his technique. And this must not be considered as a style, that is to say, the reproduction of reality in other shapes, but as the practical condition of a reflex and mechanistic process. A musical idiom which, like a mirror, reflects reality, and tries to incorporate itself in exterior things, is hampered by narrow limits, and sinks into final debility and decay. Its sole *raison d'être* lies in imitation, a musical onomatopœia.

There is, then, in Strauss's music, an essential conflict between the musician and the artist; between the musical form (the stylistic content) and the essential artistic form which is not inherent in the former, but which rather imposes itself on it from without. Strauss's musical workmanship does not, however, penetrate into the philosophical kernel of the literary allusions which inspire it. Here lies the fatal flaw—in the objective nature of his musical style. It is from this exterior and objective style that Strauss re-creates his internal outlook; and since he can only reproduce the external façade of reality, it is useless for him to attempt to build up a personal philosophy of art.

His nature also leads him into a twisting of reality in the sense of presenting what is really personal and subjective as an exterior reality. In musical terms this results in turning what is essentially lyrical and contemplative into active narrative. Thus in *Tod und Verklärung* (the most artistically balanced of all his tone-poems) the spiritual catharsis and transfiguration remain outside the true orbit of the music. And in *Ein Heldenleben* the epic grandeur of the work degenerates into a childish portrait of the *miles gloriosus*. In the *Sinfonia Domestica* his desperate attempt to renovate and bring up to date the old symphonic form dissolves in a welter of autobiographical nonsense.

The objective qualities of Strauss's music are not those commonly found in inferior works which are a superficial comment upon the realities of existence, but rather are they inherent in the proper musical world in which literary stimuli and psychological experiences are essentially extraneous.

For Strauss's musical imagination is certainly linked to his development as regards the abstract musical position and the spiritual conditions of man in their relation to the economic aspect of contemporary life. Hence arises the great respect in which Strauss is held by musicians and public alike. He presents, even flaunts, those qualities which the man of the cultured democracy of to-day possesses and admires above all others.

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Strauss's compositions are always at heart symphonic poems—a choreography in symphonic form. '*Salomé* no es apenas otra cosa que un poema sinfonico representado.' Thus observes [1] Adolfo Salazar, with much truth.

[1] Adolfo Salazar, *Musica y Musicos de Hoy*, Editorial Mundo Latino, Madrid, p. 257.

On the other hand it might be argued that his tone-poems are really operas condensed into a symphonic form. It amounts to the same thing: for there is always a duality of music and drama; one external to the other. But if the dramatic action, the driving force of the music, is separated from the musical character (i.e. the style of the work), then the composer is cut off from the very influences which should bring his work to birth. Thus the significance of the composer's function is reduced to the phenomenon of acoustical experiment. There is no universal synthesis of human thought concentrated in a single moment of musical inspiration, no truly creative factor—merely a specific process by which musical intelligence works in relation to tonal factors.

Tonal creation in Strauss is resolved into a rigid and preconceived relation of sounds. The cosmic process of artistic intuition never works in his brain, occupied with other questions; he does not trust himself unless he is disciplined by logical principles laid down in advance. Any one of Strauss's scores, taken at random, might serve as a treatise on orchestration. In him the sheer technical and mechanical ability to handle tone-values finds its quintessence. It is the story of Mozart over again—of Mozart with the soul and the unfailing intuition left out. Hence Strauss can never produce a work properly deserving the title of a symphony: for a symphony is pure music, living a free life of its own unhampered by literary or psychological allusion. The symphony is independent of other forms of art in the sense that it must absorb the spiritual realities—the fragments of a universal consciousness which is the key to artistic emotion—directly: while Strauss's symphonic music is isolated from all direct contact with spiritual exaltation and thought.

It follows, then, that in his style there is this curious position; while the underlying musical tendency is to

fit into the vast Wagnerian polyphonic structure the emotional idiom definitely tends towards the old-fashioned pre-Wagnerian romanticism.

The Wagnerian technique absorbed into itself a whole culture, and embraced an entire and grandiose lyrical system. Strauss could not reach these heights. Wagner's artistic roots lie deep in the civilization of his nation and his century: Strauss lives in a decadent and superficial age. Musically he follows the path of Wagner, but spiritually he turns aside to easier triumphs. He divested the Wagnerian idiom of its historic *raison d'être*, and filled it with outworn romantic material. Wagner in his hands becomes a mere shell which follows meekly the old Lisztian tradition of virtuosity. The nucleus, the inner driving force of Wagnerian art is thrown aside. Strauss substitutes for the inner region re-created as a musical expression, a mere technical choreographic ability, which is torn from its proper place and concentrated upon the problems of tonal creation.

It is in strict accordance with his repudiation of the contemplation and creative outlook that Strauss should, amid a plutocratic and democratic society, be considered the foremost musician of his own time. His position as 'the revolutionary on the hearth' has been skilfully calculated from the point of view of popular effect. And his technical maturity and unbounded scholastic experience are just those qualities which awaken the most reverence among the herd of orthodox music-lovers.

Strauss is not a meteor, but a fallen meteorite. He stands in the same relation to Wagner in the German Pantheon as Wundt stands to Hegel or William II to Frederick the Great.

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Richard Strauss's outlook is perhaps best exemplified

by his tendency to caricature. He has created a world of grotesque and monstrous musical characters, a kind of Punch and Judy show in musical terms. When he translates an action from the realm of reality to that of music it becomes exaggerated—a caricature of itself. *Don Quixote* is full of curious episodes, belonging in spirit to the cinema rather than to music, which waver between sheer orchestral virtuosity and a malformed sense of humour. The same comic spirit, now turned satirist, informs his music for *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, when the orchestra incorporates phrases of well-known melodies with an obvious intention of caricature. But perhaps the most noteworthy feature of this composition is the rhythmic energy which infuses such desperate life into the comparatively small but well-chosen group of instruments for which it is scored. Strauss can carry off with magnificent ease the same bravura effect with a small orchestra as with a large one. After the one hundred and five instruments used in the *Domestic Symphony*, in *Don Quixote*, or *Elektra*, this satirical comedy has only thirty-five.

Strauss's most successful venture into the realm of musical satire is, of course, *Till Eulenspiegel*, where he has made a most brilliant compromise between the musical rondo form and the literary narrative—a compromise which he also made with rather less success in *Don Quixote*, where the variation-formula is also blended with the plot of the book.

His attempt to re-create the subtle wayward idiom of Mozart breaks down in *Der Rosenkavalier*, which is neither a comic nor a sentimental (nor 'grand') opera, but a *pastiche* of everything. When we feel that Strauss has attempted to arouse the gentle ghost of Mozart ('das nächstemal schreibe ich ein Mozartoper'), we are obliged to pass it off lightly. Salazar says: 'El error es tan gracioso, el engano es tan delatador, de tal maniera revela como

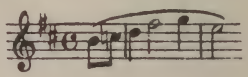
ese musico confunde el aspecto externo de las cosas con su alma esencial'. In *Rosenkavalier* sensuality and clowning take the place of charm and wit. One thing only can be unreservedly applauded—the composer's brilliant achievement in deluding so many audiences into taking this patchwork operetta seriously.

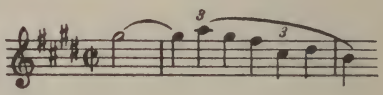
In contrast to *Rosenkavalier* in the comic style, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* may be taken as representative of the most serious side of Strauss's work. As the one, with its attempt to read a pure idiom of comedy in music, and with its stylized rococo surroundings, degenerates into a vague mixture of operatic and symphonic styles; so in *The Woman Without a Shadow* the urge to create a universal poem around a cosmic subject leads into sheer empty magniloquence. The romantic symbol of the Shadow (representing fecundity) is an attempt to reach a level of high æsthetic values, but in practice it falls to the level of propaganda. The intellectual vagaries of the piece are infinite—the ideal and the actual, symbols, morality, phantasms, the principles of life and death, a glorification of the maternal function and an allegorical assault upon the doctrines of Malthus—all these jostle one other in unrivalled confusion. As regards the music, there is the theme of marriage, a chorus of babies still unborn, and every variety of melodic cliché to be found in the decay of romanticism.

The curious symbolism of the work is exemplified by the words of the prayer sung in the depths of night: 'Husbands and wives, sleeping in the myriad houses of this sleeping city, love each other more than life itself. For you must know that the seed of life is in your keeping—of life not for yourselves, but for your love. The beloved you hold in your arms—there is the bridge over the gulf of life and death, whence the dead find new life'. And there follows the cry of the babies still to be born, whimpering in the dark: 'Mother, let us

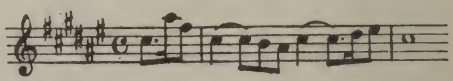
into the house, into the light. The door is locked, we cannot find the way; it is dark and we are frightened'. The kernel of the work, such as it is, lies in these quotations.

To sum up: Strauss is a vendor of second-hand goods, and all his science cannot give them their pristine excellence. He is the world's greatest purveyor of symphonic music: his scores are a magnificent bazaar, a kind of intellectual Woolworth's. So much ingenuity in working out new combinations of instruments and tonal patterns has surely never been seen before; the greatest champions of symphonic technique, when compared to him, are like pupils before their master.

Strauss has identified himself with the whole progress of modern orchestral technique. His personality pervades the whole musical thought of our time. His stock of goods, like Woolworth's, is universally useful. But its second-hand nature is always obvious. The origins of a few characteristic passages may be indicated. The first is Weber:

The next is Donizetti:



And the next Grieg:



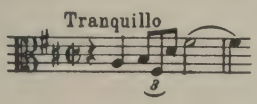
Here is a fine assortment of waltzes—models of every sort, from Strauss's great namesake of Vienna, to Franz

Lehar and the musical-comedy purveyors of dance tunes. But if these frivolities are disdained, there is a fine variety of imitations in the fugal vein. Two which need not fear invidious comparisons are the prelude to Act III of *Der Rosenkavalier*, and the double fugue in the *Sinfonia Domestica*. No testimony could be more plain than that given by the seventh and eighth variations in *Don Quixote*—the testimony of an ability to write a superlatively brilliant score which yet is utterly devoid of spiritual significance.

Themes and thematic fragments flock around like ghosts in a spirit-photograph, adhering mistily to the romantic framework of Strauss's work: they dance as at a witches' sabbath. The musical implications grow thick like a parasitic vegetation—a choked garden of weeds. For the underlying mentality never lifts itself out of its heavy fetters. It bears always the stamp of its origin, however much it clothes itself in weird fantastic garments.

There emerges from all this the vision of a shadowy half-formed personality, which expresses itself only in the creation of a technique void of real significance. It is a process of elaboration of nothing, a piling of Pelion on a non-existent Ossa. The creative mind is only a shadow of its true self, which cannot exist where the creative impulse is lacking.

Here is a specimen of what the germ of a well-known Wagnerian theme (in this case that of the Valkyries) can become in Strauss's intellectual melting-pot:



The Wagnerian fragment has lost all its original quality and savour; but it has kept the bare bones of its structure. Only—it is now a skeleton, while before it

was a living body, rich in character and colour. Strauss has stripped the flesh from the bones, and covered them with a meagre skin of his own.

Strauss has always lacked the strength to fly by his own wings, as if some invisible weight pulled him earthwards. He flaps impotently on the air, and the disturbance he creates gives an altogether false idea of his importance.

The characters which Strauss has created have something of the elusive grotesqueness of a crowd of masked dancers. At first sight they would be taken for a crowd of phantasms. But if the veil is lifted a little the character and personality of one man, their creator, discloses itself.

Rip off the veils and disguises: behind will be found the most elegant incarnation of democratic hypocrisy that ever masqueraded as a musician: the orator, the genius of windy nonsense.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, June 1882. Studied composition as a private pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff. Lived in Switzerland, 1912–18; since then in Paris.

Principal Compositions

Fantastic Scherzo. For orchestra. 1908.
Feux d'Artifice. Tone-picture for orchestra. 1908.
L'Oiseau de Feu. Ballet. 1910.
Petrouchka. Ballet. 1912.
Le Rossignol. Opera. 1914. Also arrangement as symphonic poem under title, *Le Chant du Rossignol.*
Le Sacre du Printemps. Ballet. 1913.
Renard. A burlesque. 1915.
L'Histoire du Soldat. Ballet. 1917.
Pribaoutki ('Pleasant songs'). For voice and eight instruments.
Pulcinella. Ballet. 1919.
Symphonies for wind instruments in memory of Claude Debussy, 1920.
Berceuses du Chat. For voice and three clarinets.
Mavra. Comic opera in one act on a novel by Pushkin. 1921.
Les Noces. Ballet. 1923.
Octet for wind instruments. 1923.
Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra. 1924.
Sonata for pianoforte. 1925.
Apollo Musagetes. Ballet. 1928.
Le Baiser de la Fée. Ballet. 1928.
Œdipus Rex. Opera-oratorio. 1928.
Symphonie des Psaumes. 1931.
Concerto in D for violin and orchestra. 1931.
Capriccio for pianoforte and orchestra.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

STRAVINSKY's productive activities may, for the sake of clarity, be classified under three headings, each of which represents one aspect of the composer's mentality: the works of the academic impressionist; of the Russian; and of the pseudo-classicist, the self-conscious exponent of the archaic. It is an arbitrary and approximate classification, as all such divisions must be, but it is a direction—post to the student amid the intricate and multiform activities of this composer, who is one of the most representative figures of the present day.

The music of Stravinsky's first period naturally provokes the least controversy; it displays a decorously expert technique, derived from Glazounov and Scriabin, and coloured by the contemplative idiom of the Debussian school. The *Symphony in E flat* (1905–7), an unpublished work, has been truly described as a solid four-square composition of small artistic merit. The suite for voice and orchestra, *Le Faune et la Bergère* (1907), echoes faintly the horns of elfland that Debussy sounded long before; the four pianoforte studies (op. 7) are interesting from their rhythmic energy and vivacity, as is the symphonic poem *Feux d'Artifices*, and the *Scherzo Fantastico* (1908). The successful ballet, *L'Oiseau de Feu*, with its Oriental atmosphere and its brilliant orchestration, marks a point of transition towards a less eclectic style, which is fated to a perpetual internal struggle with itself. Admittedly there are traces of Rimsky-Korsakoff, Scriabin, and Moussorgsky in Stravinsky's early work, but there is also an original and very attractive rhythmic idiom.

The native Russian aspect of Stravinsky's character—the inmost aspect it might be called—was revealed with startling clarity in *Petrouchka* (1910–11), and developed with the *Sacre du Printemps* (1911–13), and *Les Noces* which, although making its public appearance in orchestral form in 1923, had been conceived as early as 1917. The series of songs, *Pribaoutky* (1914), the *Berceuses du Chat* (1915–16), *Renard* (1916–17), and the *Four Russian Songs* represent the crown of this period of work. From this point onward Stravinsky has turned towards another goal—the conception of classicism, of music for music's sake, which henceforth obsesses him. *L'Histoire du Soldat*, which appeared in 1918, may be taken as introductory to this final period of eighteenth-century ideals and archaic research. There followed *Pulcinella* (1919), *Mavra* (1922), the octet for wind instruments, the concerto (1923–4), and the piano sonata (1924), and lastly *Œdipus Rex* (1927), and *Apollo Musagetes* (1928). It has been said that *Apollo Musagetes* is the first work of Stravinsky's old age. If by old age is meant the exhaustion of every creative faculty, then the statement is irrefutable.

The artistic reality of Stravinsky's music is apparent in those moments when he most fully reveals his Russian ancestry—when he speaks to us as a single cell, a microscopic unit of that sublime and ludicrous, that contradictory, fascinating, unbounded world which is Russian thought, with its extraordinary mingling of religion and the instinctive passions. Stravinsky has that sense of Christian heritage which lies behind *The Brothers Karamazov*, that dizzy contemplation of the universe which lies behind *The Life of Man*, the same pessimism and the same faith, the same weakness and strength, the same outlook, simple and wildly irrational—all the mass of contradictions which make the Russian mind so attractive and so exasperating to a Western European.

To be just, Stravinsky has none of the deep humanity of a Dostoievsky, or of the wild theatrical power of an Andreiev; he has nothing in *Les Noces* which approaches the ravaging emotion underlying the drama of will-power in Mitya Karamazov, the heroism of the little Iliusha, or the enigmatic fatalism of Anfissa. On the contrary, Stravinsky glories in his lack of this sensibility, the absence of which, according to him, is necessary to a truly classical outlook. His definition of himself is a classicist, an objectivist, a constructive artist. 'Je ne vois pas, pour indiquer la nature de cet art, de meilleure désignation que celle d'épique.'[1] In these words M. Ansermet has defined the claims of Stravinsky.

In point of fact Stravinsky is a formidable musical genius; but this does not hinder his agreeable and unprejudiced character from being a slave to that literary clique which, cynical and cosmopolitan by nature, has flourished in Western Europe since the end of the last century. (Witness the favourite comparison of Stravinsky with Picasso.) Before the war this movement was mere 'æstheticism'; but since the war it has grown presumptuous, even truculent, fortified by the growth of its subsidiary movements, 'objectivism' and agnostic 'surréalisme' in art.

But the pseudo-æsthetic influence of the Parisian group of post-war artists has not been able entirely to destroy Stravinsky's attractive natural musical talent. It has harmed it beyond a doubt, and Stravinsky himself has done his own gifts all the injury in his power, but they have not been entirely stultified, nor has the range of his impetuous imagination been curbed. The whole history of his personality and development is summarized by this struggle between the æsthetic intellectual attitude which Stravinsky has absorbed from his realist and literary surroundings, and his natural musical genius,

[1] *La Revue Musicale*, July 1921, p. 8.

strong, rhythmic, and almost Bacchic in its zest, springing essentially from the soil.

From a purely musical standpoint Stravinsky reveals before anything else the fundamental and unmistakable character of the Russian poet: the elemental genre of the primitive which does not necessarily imply crudity or imperfection, but an attachment to the native qualities of the imagination. The state of nature as a primary force can be comprehended by the intelligence quite apart from the rhythm of formal development, the educational tradition of past centuries. In it there is a touch of a child's imaginative exuberance, and a touch of a savage's unregulated impulsiveness. It is the spirit of all life filtered and purified by artistic intuition; a psychological virginity unknown to us Westerns, a thing outside our experience. The Russian mind, starved of anything like traditional culture, has its roots in barbarism, its originality in that crudity which its poets have verified and re-created, but not covered up. The education of the Russian mind has all come from the West. The growth of Russian art depends upon its contact with the West, the friction and attrition of these spiritual contrasts. The key to its history lies in the reactions of the popular and primitive elements to the spread of Western culture. There it is found that the Russian mind loses none of its characteristics, but rises to new heights of added complexity and purity of thought, and reflects the glories of the contemplative and the changing soul. The shining lights of this phase are Dostoievsky and Andreiev. Behind them, smaller in stature, but equally characteristic of the national outlook, stands Stravinsky. The adulation of his admirers has almost hidden the real man under the clichés of objectivism and realism, but he is there under the clay mask.

The Russian character of Stravinsky's talents should

not be understood as meaning that the composer has adopted Russian melodies, but in a more fruitful sense —that his music breathes an atmosphere permeated by the savour of his national tradition and heritage. Two distinct tendencies appear in the artist's mind: the first sincere, a development of his independent outlook; the second artificial, representing his reaction to external influences—in this case the surroundings of Western twentieth-century culture.

Stravinsky is at his best in the period between *Petrouchka* and *Les Noces*; it is in this period that his true charm is condensed. The revolutionaries of the political world, who are generally reactionaries in art, have neglected their champion, as he shows himself to be in these works, preferring the academic exercises of Miaskovsky or Walascek. Stravinsky does smell of the fresh sour earth; he is the Burns of Russia. *Petrouchka* fell like a meteor upon the comfortable Strauss-dominated musical world of the pre-war twentieth century. The triumphant crystal-clear technique he displays in this ballet is like a flash of light in a murky wilderness. The harmonies and rhythms of the dance-music create a dramatic atmosphere which ferments, which quivers with suppressed energy—the scenes of the fair, the carnival, the quack, the dolls—all the crowd that makes up the living world, all the dolls who become tragic actors. Above it Stravinsky looms, enormous, the mechanic who pulls the wires and makes the puppets laugh and dance and die. Take the introductory *adagietto* of the second tableau, before the entry of the dance.[1] The music, strongly rhythmic in character, absorbs into itself the mere external realities of gesture and scenery, and becomes plastic and comprehensive; and this is the secret of how *Petrouchka* (in contrast to *Les Noces*, where the stage action is an indispensable

[1] Orchestral score, *Edition Russe de Musique*, pp. 67 et seq.

part of the artistic whole) stands by itself as a purely musical composition. In the generously drawn tone-pictures of the Carnival and of the Russian dance, the popular melodies become an integral part of the lyrical texture, so new, so flexible, and so clear. Stravinsky uses these tunes as if they were indeed children of his own begetting; he only turns them to his own ends because he himself is an expression of the national self of which they also are a part. The Russian as an artist can permit himself such licence. In *Petrouchka* Stravinsky has at length discovered himself. The form he has chosen comes from the intuitive recesses of his mind; and once he recognizes it he follows it until it leads him into artistic paradox, to the chaos latent in his naïve and anarchic exuberance of spirit.

Stravinsky is a barbarian who has been trained in the school of pure form in art. The *Sacre du Printemps* is the hymn of his innate barbarism. His musical sense, like that of all primitives, is founded on movement, which is to say, rhythm. Melody, in so far as he brings himself to indulge in it, is always translated throughout his work into a witty and spirited system of punctuation. Study the opening of *Le Sacre*, gentle and spring-like in its freshness, until the sudden change comes to a bitter mood expressed by stiff angular phrases. Stravinsky's pathos comes from an aggressive melodic idiom, which reaches its acme of development in this primitive and orgiastic work, a savage song of the earth's cruelty and mercy. But it holds pages of magnificent poetry, such as the 'Rondo of Spring', and the electrifying 'Earth Dance'.

The pace of the work, shaken by the dizzy series of emotional transitions, finally imposes its own limits on the composer's imagination. He is drunk with his own creative enthusiasm. In the fascination of building one movement out of the materials of a former one

Stravinsky loses all control over the timbre of his work, and the details of the work are assembled out of all proportion to each other; he builds up, destroys, alters, and rebuilds, continually seeking a true balance. Stravinsky's strength lies in this forward-smashing impatience, this sensibility that joys in twisting and reclothing itself in new tone-patterns, while remaining pure sensuality. It is a kind of irony which, even though it may take the shape of a malicious geometrical equation, as in the 'Three Pieces' for quartet, or in the circus-devilry of the *Histoire du Soldat*, retains a substance, a strong relief of its own. Stravinsky handles the tone-values throughout their range with such skill that he finally attains the virtuosity of a ring-master in a circus. He is a tight-rope walker, who runs along the sharp edge of dissonance without ever cutting himself. At times his work reminds the listener of the *Roman de Fauvel*, or of the *Hunchback of Arras*. But the superiority of Stravinsky over the musician of the Middle Ages lies in his rhythmic power. He builds up his tonal material in symphonies of movement. And this movement is so lively and ardent that it grips every other element in the work, and twists them about itself. For Stravinsky cannot treat the problem of tone-values from a static point of view; he cannot isolate sounds by themselves, as the traditional harmonic theory dictates, but can only consider them in motion, only capture them as they pass.

. . . . . .

We have, then, in Stravinsky, an example of a noble temperament expressing itself in art, a creator of a sensual and primitive nature; and we have also the champion of an intellectual futurism, a decadent and a twisted visionary. His exuberant and yet shy nature is a force that ends by conquering, if not crushing, the

opposite side to his character. The classic work of art which Stravinsky embraces in his dreams has never emerged from his world of dreams to hard reality. For it must be wrought from a balance between the warring powers of the will and the imagination. And Stravinsky is in the thick of a perpetual struggle between the creative energy of his musical temperament which never resists the temptation to explain itself, and the æsthetic paradox which seizes his mentality. The clear shape of this attractive and misleading paradox has been traced in the mass of criticism of Stravinsky; and Stravinsky himself, directly or indirectly, has contributed to it.

Nevertheless, the weak point of this criticism is that it is purely negative. Stravinsky is a classical composer, according to M. Ansermet and M. de Schloezer. Why classical? Because he is not a romantic—*lucus a non lucendo*. Classicism is the negation of personality, the absence of a subject, of the centre and driving force of every work of art. But if Stravinsky stands for the reaction against romanticism, and hence is a classicist, then how can classical art be explained in the days when it was classical *per se*, when it was self-justifying instead of a mere reaction against romanticism? M. Ansermet is seeking, like St. Thomas Aquinas, for a principle which, in his case, shall elucidate the difference between the art of Bach and that of, say, Beethoven, and which shall allow him to settle how the dominant form nullifies the importance of the individual artist. But he loses his way amid these tangled definitions, and in trying to leave aside the question of Stravinsky's emotional personality he is constrained to admit the importance of sentiment in his work.[1]

Whatever then may be the real secret of the classicism at which Stravinsky aims, it is somewhat elucidated by

[1] *La Revue Musicale*, July 1921, pp. 8 and 14.

what M. de Schloezer[1] observes, that classical art is 'art which introduces movement into the material; which grasps it and remoulds it by a clearer light, nearer to its real self'. Yet this is not enough by itself. The conception of Nature is also necessary, which the same writer defines as follows: 'Dans le *Sacre* c'est encore uniquement le règne de la nature active, mais impersonnelle; vivante, mais indifférente'.

Then Nature, if any one can bring himself to conceive of it thus, is dumb and unresponsive, empty of primitive passions, conveying nothing to the senses or the imagination—a dead Nature from which the artist shrinks, instead of studying it and reproducing it as he should. 'Il s'agit de tuer le sentiment, l'émotion subjective, et de faire agir directement les choses.' And thus M. Ansermet: '. . . le caractère objectif de ce dynamism qui ne se passe que dans les choses et ne laisse rien supposer d'un mouvement de l'auteur'.

But the conception of an objective and automatic world implies that reality is imagined as a puppet, an image of something else—which, as Euclid says, is absurd. The very act of giving life, of imparting movement into dead things, is the best guarantee of a subjective mind at work, of the artist's brain which is fused into a single point of activity amid a universal consciousness. Stravinsky's error, which pervades all his musical psychology, lies in abandoning himself to the seductive and easy empiricism of the objective thinkers, which influences and corrupts his contemporaries.

Stravinsky's natural bent towards popular melody, his rhythmic originality and simplicity confirm rather than deny the essentially lyrical origin of his technique. When he deforms the natural shape of his work he believes that he is giving it a fuller growth, and fails to see that this deformation is the result of the internal

[1] *La Revue Musicale*, December 1923, p. 122.

struggle between instinct and culture. When instinct triumphs momentarily the result is a work of art. For Stravinsky is not merely lyrical by nature; his idiom is in itself delightful. His power and originality strike the listener like a blow, with a vigour and impetus to which the sensualist composers never attained. And this overwhelming energy is the reason why he believes his interpretation of reality in sound to be of universal application.

At bottom his objectivism is in utter discord with the true nature of music. The problem of musical composition consists to a great extent in uniting and fusing in one a multiplicity of succeeding instants of vision. The composer's glance must embrace everything that lies within the horizon of his own age. Three-quarters of the reasons for the failure of a work of art can be traced to a stagnation of the creative power in relation to artistic movement external to the work itself. A purely objective conception of music necessarily reduces itself to action which counteracts its own initiative germ, its own driving force.

Stravinsky was born an instinctive opponent of the post-romantic and Debussian decadents, and this is one of his most admirable qualities; but he has forced himself, in the name of classicism and objectivism, into practices worthy only of the most brazen-faced musical sensualities. In fact, he has carried it so far that he overreaches himself, and falls into a practical hedonistic and subjective position. To this we owe the last part of *Le Rossignol*, *Renard*, *L'Histoire du Soldat* (especially the *Petit Concert*), the *Funeral Symphony* in memory of Claude Debussy, the Three Pieces for quartet, and many of the songs for voice and instruments. The theoretic premises being granted, anything the listener pleases may be read into the music. If it is once established that the subject-artist need be no more than a motor,

a driving force, then it is easy to see how it may be denied or claimed with equal force that Stravinsky has attained his ends. Nevertheless it must be kept in mind that even in the most wavering side of his nature the musician in Stravinsky seldom fails to achieve a novel and striking result in his music.

From the turning point in Stravinsky's development (exemplified by *Petrouchka*, *Le Sacre*, and *Les Noces*), when the prejudices of the objectivist school get the upper hand, his fate as an artist is sealed. He ceases to be free from the day on which his action as a musician pure and simple begins to be limited by a theoretical conception of music pure and simple. Stravinsky is a practical musician by nature; but he pretends to wrap up the practice of music in abstract theories, and the result is a dry mummy instead of a living body. The struggle of opposing idioms culminates in the phase which marks the passing of the authentic Russian influences, and the adoption of a so-called classicism. Another sign lies in the forced isolation which he imposes on his world of sound-images, and in the projection of the images in a distorted shape which is only a counterfeit of the composer's real intention. Rhythm becomes monopolistic in its importance, and in its garish nakedness drives the music against its own limitations, as one who compresses a steel spring until the limit is reached. The musician beats against the barriers of his imagination, and satisfies his desires by a wild Walpurgis-night of sound which too often becomes incoherent and chaotic; but he does it with all the energy of an iconoclast, and with the severity of academic logic. Yet he cannot alter his own limitations, however violent the hands he lays upon himself; he is guilty of betraying his own tradition. And in the demonic fury of his effort to build up a world of images which are not part of his own experience of reality, he is like the figure of the

wretch in Dante's *Inferno* who was condemned to hold up his own severed head in his hands for all the world to see.

Stravinsky made a violent *volte-face* when he wrote *Pulcinella*. *Graecia capta ferum victorem coepit.* Henceforth European tradition rules the ancestral Asiatic traits of the composer of *Le Sacre du Printemps*. It is the tradition of culture—not the snobbish and sham æsthetic Europe of to-day, but the true Europe, imbued with a sense of its glorious past. After *Pulcinella* Stravinsky wrote *Mavra*,[1] a comic opera after Italian models, upon the farcical adventures of another 'Count Ory'. The naïve dialogue of the old farce is copied with ostentatious simplicity. But in the music it is the melodic tendency which prevails; and it is the real Stravinsky who reveals himself, although he has soaked himself in tzigane rhythms, in this fresh and melodious work. The lament of the mother for the dead maidservant is a page of delightful comic writing, and the quartet with the disguised hussar is an episode in which the composer reaches the highest pitch of stylistic originality.

Amid the group of Stravinsky's latest instrumental works (the sonata, the octet, and the piano concerto) it is the concerto which succeeds best from the point of view of effectiveness and musical intensity. Stravinsky is now writing under the stress of historic motifs. The seventeenth century, Bach, and the idea of classicism have imposed themselves firmly upon his tortured and fervid intelligence. Form has seized him, for the moment, in its scholastic and abstract manifestations, as once it seized him in a futurist and synthetic manifestation. The terminology is altered, but the spiritual situation is unaltered. Two worlds are in contact in Stravinsky's mind, and thus richly endowed he always carries off his effects. Turning towards the past, once

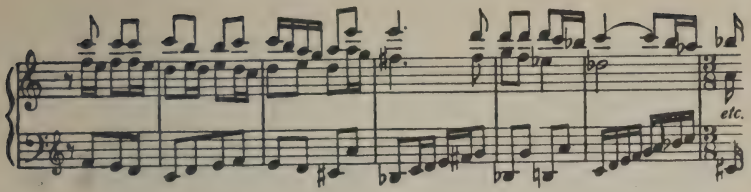
[1] *Mavra*. Voice and piano score. *Edition Russe de Musique*, pp. 47–53.

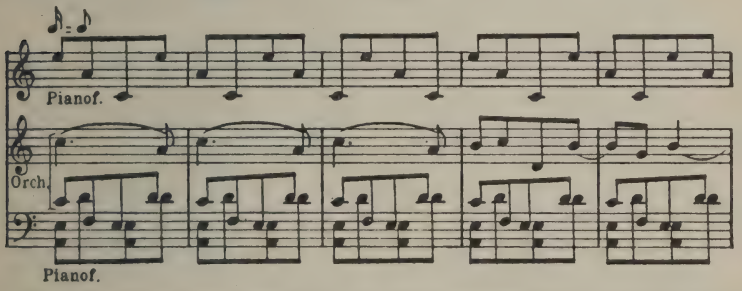
more the vital energy of his music finds free play in a reaction from the Straussian and Debussian influences, from the symphonic poem and its muddy orchestration. For reproducing the rhythmic nature of Stravinsky's colour, the percussion, the wind, and the pianoforte are the most suitable instruments. It is his natural shrinking from sentimentality which has led Stravinsky to make his works a clear-cut cameo of the objective world.

He has worked out a theory which is all his own of the formal significance of music and design, as the personal and subjective factors of creation *outside music*. The idea is extravagant, if considered by the standards of pure theory, but it is significant if considered in the light of the extraordinary artistic activity it has produced. Stravinsky deludes himself into thinking he is an objectivist and a classicist, and fails to realize that his very self-deception reveals the essentially subjective nature of his mind. He pretends to give his aspirations a universal quality of æsthetic conception, and to allow his methods to be dominated by this universal conception. It is thus that the paradox of Stravinsky's 'classicism' has arisen. The musicians of the eighteenth century, of whom he considers himself a direct successor, built up their structure of form without any preconceived system such as dominates him. They had no purist ideals, no stylistic obsessions to rule their creative instinct. Form, in the history of art, has been always changing—not external to the artist's nature, but the expression of the nature in its self-domination and self-control. Classicism does not mean stepping outside the bonds of personality, but the fusion of its elements, the establishment of an equilibrium between them. How does Stravinsky mean to realize his conception of classical art? By fitting himself within the paradigm of typical conventional form—the sonata, the concerto,

the opera, and oratorio. This does not mean the revival of classical arts; it only employs certain of its gestures—adapting itself to a practical expedient rather than creating new ones as required.

The frame of mind which sympathizes with a form that is established may produce works of art even where the stylistic march has been roughly interrupted, as happened at the Renaissance. But at such a time the currents of change are vaster and more universal than the one in which Stravinsky's genius swims. The style and mannerisms of the eighteenth century applied to contemporary technique give an indication of healthy aspiration towards balancing the disproportionate elements in modern music—but they are no more than an indication; they are not the thing itself. It is an attempt to infuse a little moral and spiritual order into a century of mass-production and machinery, but it is no more than an attempt. The form of John Sebastian Bach has become a kind of Mecca for the musicians of our century. It is painful to see a musician such as Stravinsky reduced to such beggary as to have to make a tour of the centuries looking for good material and examples to follow. But it is also amusing to see how he, who set out in the role of a beggar, comes back like a merchant prince; to see what splendid use he makes of the borrowed material, how he adapts it to his use, and turns his natural moujik's dwelling into a legendary palace. He has found flowers on inaccessible mountain passes, and made delicate garlands with which to cover his roughness—so that he finally presents a perfect picture of a rustic Narcissus. The piano concerto is a work of this kind. It is alive with a vital force which captivates the listener; but the 'restoration' of form acts so literally as to make the work subservient to it. The designs drawn from Bach are often evident:



But Stravinsky knows how to tint them with his own subtle harmonies, and obtains an endless flow of musical inspiration from them It is not only from Bach and the classical school that the factors of his musical construction are drawn; the last movement begins with a rhythmic device that is a fragment of a celebrated Polacca of Chopin, like a splinter from off the façade of a venerable edifice. A progression familiar in the *Novelletten* of Schumann immediately follows it; but Stravinsky builds out of these heterogeneous elements a new rhythmic unity which is nourished by thematic forms and by startling polyphonic manifestations.[1] There are many moments of lyrical emotion; the finest example is perhaps in the *adagio*:

But the unique quality of this marvellously beautiful episode comes from the way in which the musician

[1] Example: *Concerto for Pianoforte*, p. 43, imitations between piano and orchestra; p. 45, melody in orchestra derived from the *largo* of the introduction; p. 47, piano solo, repeat on p. 49, augmentation of same episode on pp. 50–1. On p. 54, No. 80, the orchestra develops a canon above a delightful cantabile movement around which the piano builds a gliding rhythmic movement in *concertante* style.

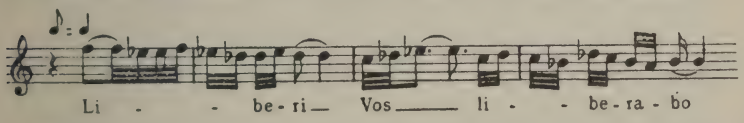
touches the heart, after the vague wanderings of the pianoforte solo, with a gentle melancholy mood of meditation.

The piano concerto, together with its smaller brethren, the sonata and the octet, is without any doubt a superb monument of talent, but it also represents a crisis of the artistic conscience. It is not, as some have maintained, scholastic music,[1] for scholasticism implies barrenness, while Stravinsky works surrounded by all the flourishes and appendages of his tumultuous energy. His is an effervescent spirit which never hesitates to seize and make use of anything which catches his fancy. He makes only a pretence of style; for he is perpetually in search of it, yet can never claim that it has been found. The musician has incorporated a defect in his make-up and carries it triumphantly before us—an unashamed confession of sublime incapacity. He is the modern poet, the undisciplined dreamer, who imagines that the blazing shield of the sun is only a mirror of his own image; and who can also turn his eyes into the shade and meditate on the nature of reality—an Oriental capacity for wild fancies and profound self-absorption. He believes that he can recapture reality by breathing new life into old forms.

Stravinsky wrote *Œdipus Rex* in a spirit of sackcloth and ashes. He has called it an oratorio-opera, with scenes which do not represent any setting, and actors who do not act—whose function is to give the effect of statues endowed with voices. The curiousness of such a spectacle has tended to distract the public's attention away from the only significant element—the music—in this strange pantomime. It matters little to us if the drama's development is related in a monotone by a kind of Cicero in a tail-coat; it is more important to observe that the text, taken from the Sophoclean original,

[1] *La Revue Pleyel*, June 1927, p. 295.

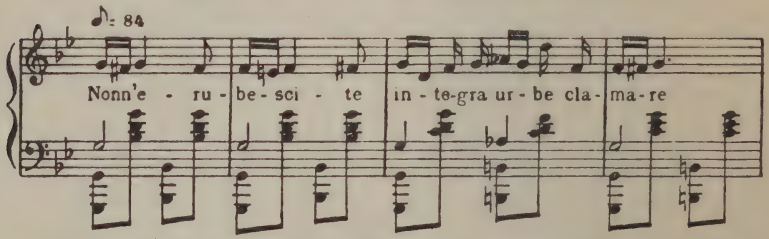
has been translated into Latin and then set to music, probably in order to give a rather precious suggestion of the old classical oratorio; that in the world of the theatre the lack of action in this indefinable work can hardly stand the test of stage presentation. But, concentrating on the musical aspects of the work, it is clear that Stravinsky has not succeeded, as his apologists proclaim that he has done, in entirely changing his style, although the peculiar conditions which he has imposed on himself in this work have limited his range of stylistic action. He holds in subjection, as regards the æsthetic principles which it involves, the form which he is trying to reinstate; but he is ruled entirely by the external aspects. The composer of *Petrouchka* has put himself in a prison; but his own lively nature reacts in spite of himself against the self-donned fetters, and succeeds in producing a work with elements of grandiosity and power. The choruses have an epic quality, for instance, the finale, 'Mulier in vestibulo comas lacerare, claustris occludere exclamare', which reaches a dizzy height in the passage 'Aspicite foras'[1]. This oratorio-opera (let us grant the description) develops its theme by arias, choruses, and recitative passages—the last-named being reduced to an absolute minimum, forming no more than bridge-passages to ease the transition from one plane to another. The first is that of Œdipus, in which he lifts up a voice shaken by emotion against the bitter shouts of the populace:



There follows a more decisive aria by Creon, full of leaps which try the voice severely; it is very effective

[1] *Œdipus Rex: Edition Russe de Musique*, voice and piano score, p. 80 to the end.

and moving towards the end. In response Œdipus takes up the melody of the first aria, the desolate theme associated with the phrase, 'Clarissimus Œdipus Thebas iterum servabo'. Two arias follow, with short interludes of expositions by the chorus—that of Tivesias, solemn and majestic, and of Œdipus against the suspected crime. They are rich in ideas, but too subjugate to the tyranny of the rhythm. The first act is ended by a chorus of truly royal dignity, as clear-cut as a bas-relief. The second act opens with the anxious voice of Jocasta intervening in the dispute between the relations. It is a piece which recalls ancient Italian models and breathes the atmosphere of Pergolesi—the Pergolesi whose spirit Stravinsky had marvellously recaptured in his *Pulcinella*. But the day of miracles (for Stravinsky) has passed. This is the voice of Jocasta, in her aria, with its repeat in the best manner of the eighteenth century:



The duet between Jocasta and Œdipus ('Oracula mentiuntur') is on the lines already made familiar to the listener, with some curious sharp corners and harmonic edges, more or less typical of Stravinsky. The narrative of the Messenger is a lovely piece of writing (beginning 'Mortus Polybus'). Here can be discerned a profound and original quality of expression; the tone of the music, although superficially tranquil and uncomplicated, trembles with a suppressed hint of tragedy. It is a moment which reveals the best in Stravinsky's neo-classicism. The Messenger's part is frank and dignified;

in the music his speech acquires a Homeric rhythm, 'Repperam in monte puerum Œdipoda, derelictum in monte parvulum Œdipoda foratum pedes'. The chorus 'Resciturus Sum' is simple and yet ominous in its tranquillity.[1] The part of the Peasant, the bearer of terrible news ('Oportebat tacere'), is less striking; but when, after the aria of Œdipus 'Nonne nostrum', the voice of the Messenger is added to that of the Peasant, and they comment together in the form of a *Ritornello*, resuming the sepulchral tone of the chorus 'Resciturus', the sense of doom and impending horror returns.

From the cry of Œdipus, 'Natus sum quo nefastum est', right to the end of the work, the music grows in intensity. The close is given by the chorus which, as it began, concludes the work on a religious note.

The conclusions already drawn from the story of the concerto may be applied to the *Œdipus Rex*. In the latter case, as well as in the former, Stravinsky has substituted a semblance for the real soul, and imagines that he has created a new and boundless world. The voice of the desolate King of Thebes might almost be that of Stravinsky himself, crying in the wilderness.[2] The contemplative fixity of Œdipus, Jocasta, Creon, and Tiresias is the result of the defects inherent in a form which is only a reconstructed version of the original. Stravinsky wishes to forget himself in the object of his contemplation like an Oriental fakir, but ends by merely remembering that he must realize his stylistic programme. The Sophoclean tragedy does not really penetrate the music; for the philologist takes the poet's place. His interest is mainly in form as a specimen which can be brought back to life; and his scientific interest determines his emotional outlook. Stravinsky's idea of classicism reveals itself in its true colours—love for the external aspect of form, for form as an abstraction or as

[1] Ed. cit., p. 67. [2] See *The Dominant*, December 1927, p. 73.

a phenomenon. It is a brand of pedantry which in a musician of wide capabilities such as Stravinsky may be interesting, but which, if the personal magnetism be subtracted, is nothing but dry pedantry. There can be no excuse for an Œdipus stripped of his essential humanity, of the living flesh and blood with which Sophocles endowed him. In Stravinsky's version he is but a decaying statue in a deserted museum. The eyes are empty sockets in his stony head, as though his legendary fate had come too soon. He is made to perform his tragedy as he would sing the 'Tantum Ergo'. The listener feels as though he were face to face with an open tomb reeking of mortality.

Stravinsky covers these dead creatures of his imagination with academic robes. But he is none too successful a pedant; his heart beats, and his blood flows through his veins. The epitaphs he deciphers are written on living flesh. His expiation is made by the emotion he cannot conceal; he twists in agony beside the blind and suffering Œdipus of his own creation, but can never step into the seventh heaven of pure melody, where he longs to be.

MANUEL DE FALLA

Born Cadiz, 23 November 1876. Studied the pianoforte under José Tragó, and composition under Felipe Pedrell at Madrid, winning a special prize for piano playing at the Real Conservatorio de Música. In 1905 he won the prize in a national opera competition organized by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes with *La Vida Breve*—subsequently produced at Nice in 1913 with great success. Falla resided in Paris 1907–14, and became friendly with Debussy, Ravel, Dukas, and others, but retired to Spain on the outbreak of war.

Principal Compositions

La Vida Breve ('Life is Short'). Opera. 1905.

Four *Pièces Espagnoles* for piano. 1909.

Noches en los Jardines de España ('Nights in the Gardens of Spain'). Symphonic impressions for pianoforte and orchestra. 1916.

Three melodies for violin and pianoforte. 1910.

Seven popular Spanish songs for violin and pianoforte.

Homenaje, pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy. For guitar.

Fantasia Bética. For piano. 1919.

Concerto. For harpsichord and small orchestra. 1926.

El Amor Brujo ('Magical Love'). Ballet. 1915.

El Sombrero de Tres Picos ('The Three-Cornered Hat'). Ballet. Produced 1919.

El Retablo de Maese Pedro ('Master Peter's Puppet-Show'). Puppet-opera. 1923.

SPANISH music has, on the face of it, two main sources—the tradition of folk-song, with all its rhythmic and melodic patrimony; and the universal canons of form into which the musical experience of the past has been poured as into a mould.

The different categories of musical form received their original baptism from the incursions of Christianity into the realm of culture; later, from the reaction of humanism and secularism which was worked out on that historic battleground of civilization comprised in the social triangle of France, Italy, and Germany. In this active process of growth, which the unintelligent methods of scholastic teaching devitalized until it was a mere blind mechanism, can be traced the early history of musical grammar. The edifice of vocal polyphony was built up on the foundation of the liturgical chant; around it there grew freely the prolific plant of popular melody; in it was born the new world of instrumental technique. And the latter was personified and fostered by the sonata form.

But medieval music was essentially, and by right of birth, Latin. It was as Latin as the Church of Rome, as the French *ars antiqua*, as the polyphonic architecture which interpreted the Gothic spirit in music by the light of the Palestrinian ideal, shining with Christian faith. Even if the idea of contrapuntal singing does reveal Celtic and Anglo-Saxon traces, it is beyond all doubt that only in the heart of Latinity did it find its logical codification, and put forth strong roots to nourish future growth.

The significant epoch of Teutonic music came later; it was born amid the wild eddies and cataracts of human thought, at the time of the Reform. Nevertheless the Italian–French musical civilization and the German culture do form one historical entity, and it is confusing the issue to separate them into watertight compartments.

The peoples of the eastern part of Europe held themselves aloof from this movement; the spiritual lines they followed were radically different from those of the West. While their religion and philosophical outlook tended to become Occidental, their culture remained quite distinct. Spain was a Latin country, but it had an intimate contact with the East; a contact which prevented it from following the other Latin countries in the development of a musical idiom, and was effective in determining a very different type of national music within its frontiers. Other Oriental peoples, such as the Russians and Hungarians (to mention the most noteworthy from the point of view of native idiom), being apart from the general trend of Western music, sought a foundation for autonomous development at home. It was not so in Spain, whose heart was too Latin to alienate itself completely from a tradition linked to the whole story of Western culture; but the Oriental influences were equally strong—at any rate powerful enough to hinder the formation of a truly independent popular and national musical consciousness.

Spanish musicians, confronted with this double tradition, were perplexed as to which branch to follow. The result was a dispersion of creative energies, and most Spanish musicians fell into confusion when they started to tackle the problem of attaining individuality and a national style. The share of Latin Spain in the musical development of the other Latin countries was reduced to feeling the backwash of a wave whose energy

had spent itself elsewhere, while the influence of Oriental civilization determined the formation of new tendencies, rich in character, but essentially anonymous and collective, incapable of assuming an individual personality.

The Moorish invasions, from the beginning of the eighth century, opened the boundaries of Spain to Eastern influences, whose origins lay as far as Persia and India—in fact, wherever Arab civilization had penetrated. The Moorish domination noticeably retarded the conversion of Spain to Christianity, which took place towards the eleventh century. It is clear that Arab art exercised a determining influence on Spanish music—which does not preclude the national temperament from reacting strongly to these exotic influences. A landmark of capital importance was the adoption of the Byzantine liturgy by the Spanish Church. Between the Byzantine elements and the autochthonous Oriental element a reciprocity can be traced which has a profound effect upon the formation of the Spanish idiom in music.

Amidst this religious policy there can be discerned a national spirit, in the hymning of the 'holy warfare' and the martyrs of the Church in Spain. The 'romances' are the natural expression of national art, with their essentially secular and warlike character, springing from the heart of the people and found in the repertory of the 'archaics' of the sixteenth century, and of the 'guitarists' of the seventeenth. The *Romancero del Cid* is the epitome of Spanish national art at the end of the Middle Ages.

Spain was drawn into the orbit of the troubadour movement and at the same time her musical growth entered upon a new phase represented by the pious character of the *cantigas*, and of the liturgical representation of the Christian sacraments. Henceforth she

became a living part of Latin musical culture, and with the appearance of the *Cancioneros* she turned towards what was to be the most brilliant epoch of her musical existence, with the generation of the great contrapuntists, from Bartolomeo de Escobedo to Tomás Luis de Victoria. The organist of Cahezon, for his *tientos* and his *differencias*, well deserves Pedrell's cognomen of 'the Spanish Bach', although the comparison with the great John Sebastian may seem a little inappropriate in the case of a composer who died in 1566.

The Spanish musical theorists, from Ramis de Pareja in the fifteenth century to Eximeno (whom the enthusiasm of his contemporaries named the Newton of music) in the eighteenth, belong by culture and outlook essentially to the Western world.

On the other hand popular music, with its intellectually simple and realist outlook, develops from stimuli derived from the Eastern connection, and which can be analysed into three groups of major importance: the Byzantine liturgy, the Moorish invasion, and the gipsy wanderings.

Manuel de Falla has brought to light the way in which the primitive character of the popular Spanish songs is recaptured in the *siguiriya gitana*, the classic type of Andalusian melody—which (outside the Byzantine and Arab range) also reappears in the *cante hondo* of the wandering gipsy tribes which settled in Spain during the seventeenth century.[1] It is not to be thought, Falla warns us, that the *siguiriya* and its derivatives are merely tunes transported from the East to the West. It is the result of a grafting—or rather of a coincidence of origin—which is not apparent in any one instance, but is the consequence of a long process of growth and change. Here must be sought the reason why the

[1] J. B. Trend, *Manuel de Falla and Spanish Music.* Knopf, New York, 1929, pp. 15–35.

Andalusian melodic idiom, while similar in certain essential characteristics to that of races geographically separate from Spain, yet retains a strong individuality of its own.

At the cross-roads of its development Spanish musical literature shows signs of outside influences at work; actually its real interest for the student dies with the exhaustion of its expressive power in the seventeenth century, when the original qualities of Spanish music seem to have been completely decadent. The *zarzuela* is little to throw into the scale against the tremendous growth of opera in Italy, and the popularity of the Spanish guitar was the only thing which kept alive any knowledge and taste for instrumental music, and carried on the old tradition. In the eighteenth century popular Spanish sentiment, weak and decadent as it was, tried to get an advantage over the Italians, but although it managed to find a common ground with them in Domenico Scarlatti—a fact to which the Spaniards are prone to attach more than its real importance—it was unable to withstand the power of virtuosity, as exemplified, for instance, by the celebrated Farinelli. At this point the story of Spanish music identifies itself with that of Italian music. The only Spanish musicians who emerged from the obscurity in which the rest of their countrymen lay were those who came to Italy for their musical education—men like Domenico Terradellas, Gerolamo Abos, or Davide Perez.

Neither Mariano Rodriguez de Ledesma in the nineteenth century, nor the last of the *tonadilléros*, Manuel Garcia—author of the famous *polo* in the comic opera, *El Criado fingido*, were able to stabilize the cause of Spain's musical history. Hence the appearance in the middle of the century of Joaquin Nin and Felipe Pedrell has been described as the beginning of the renaissance of Spanish music.

From this point onwards a new period of crisis opens in the creative aspects of Spanish music. Señor Salazar, with his usual clarity and good sense, draws an excellent picture of these new conditions [1]—courageously tackling the problems which arise, not hesitating to outline the difficulties, and making certain objections to the conventional view (in this respect following Weissmann). The objections boil down to this: from the day on which Spanish musicians began to evoke national and traditional feeling from popular melody there arose the danger of 'provincialism', a local patriotism deadly to art. From this we arrive at the position expounded by Weissmann; either Spanish music must follow the canons of local tunes and folk-song, and thus clip its wings until it became a mere travesty of art, a mere *género pintoresco de salon*—or it must accept the general formulæ of European artistic standards, and thus lose its national characteristics. The arrival of Debussian impressionism merely aggravated the problem, and the reaction of composers, such as Albeniz and Granados, was strong. But the influence of French impressionism, according to the German critic, was beneficial; 'y gracias a el,' concludes Salazar, 'se comienza a producir un arte indigena que, independizandose de la forma idiomatica universal, inicia la possibilitad de llegar a hablar por cuenta propria'. Impressionism, from one point of view, has renewed in modern days the lost qualities of primitivism; it broke away the crust of traditional form and rekindled the simple primal motives of life and art that lie beneath it. It set free the Spanish national soul from the academic parasite, and from the barnacle incrustation of rhetoric left over from a belated romanticism. After this purification of spirit there emerges the art of Manuel de Falla, which

[1] Adolfo Salazar, *Musica y Musicos de Hoy*. Madrid, 1929, p. 128 ff. ('España como Nacion musical'). 'El "renacimiento" musical de España y sus problemas.'

Weissmann hails as the first in which the Spanish spirit shows its most universal and attractive form.

But can Falla's art, with all its fine qualities, conquer this traditional dualism immanent in Spanish music—the contest between the universal qualities of form sprung from a European tradition and the individual and localized qualities of popular tradition?

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Falla's first compositions bear the date 1909—the year in which Isaac Albéniz died. With Pedrell the national character of Spanish music had been defined—but only theoretically. With Albéniz the resurrection had been crystallized into concrete fact. The *Iberia* of Albéniz's imagination is a kind of folk-lore anthology passed through the filter of musical taste—a taste educated and formed by the French school. Debussy's Spain is a country of the imagination, seen through the misty clouds of dreamland. Falla observes (and J. B. Trend quotes him in his book) that:

> Debussy wrote Spanish music without knowing more of Spain —of the actual country, that is—than may be seen in a few hours spent at San Sebastian. He knew it, of course, from books, from the songs and dances given by Spanish performers in Paris. Moreover, he was interested in the modal melodies of liturgical music; and as Spanish popular song has been influenced by the Church modes it happened that even in the works of Debussy which were not intended to give a Spanish effect, Falla met with the modal writing, together with the cadences, rhythms, and ornaments which seemed to bear a close relationship with the natural music of his own country.[1]

Albéniz, in the content of his work, is directly and positively Spanish; he takes from life the forms of national tunes, and compiles a rhapsodic repertory of living and authentic music. But his method is borrowed

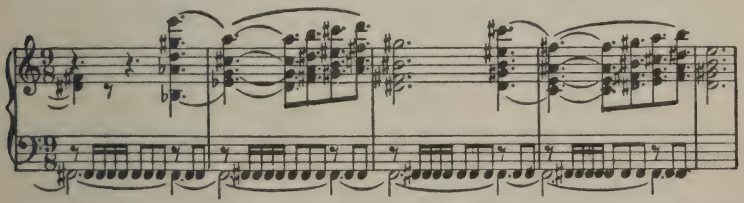
[1] J. B. Trend, op. cit., p. 52. See also same page, 'Debussy's Andalucia was an Andalucia of dreams . . .' et seq.

directly from the French. The wine is native Spanish, but it was bottled north of the Pyrenees. The natural life of Spanish song ends in mere conventional and literary 'Spanish music'. Rhythms and tone-colours, which should be utterly spontaneous, are fixed in an harmonic frame which becomes mannered and monotonous. Granados, dogged by the spectre of affectation, is no more independent or assured; while Turina is a musical confectioner whose wares are suitable for the pier orchestra or the tea-shop quartet. Take the *Jardins d'Andalousie*, or *Le Quartier de Santa Cruz* (the author's sub-title to which is 'Rhythmic Variations'), and it will be seen that they are essentially piano compositions. The quality of the music—despite its other obvious good points—lacks something fundamental, it is haunted by a drawing-room idea of gentility, which pervades every note of the score. It is laden with so much polite convention, such coquetry and such mannerisms, that it seems destined for those minor pianists who attain a certain technical dexterity with their fingers, but who never shake off the appalling mediocrity of their minds. It naturally appeals to that section of the public which idolizes this class of executant, and the type of music he plays.

The apparition of Manuel de Falla in the story of modern Spanish music is significant; the three nocturnes for piano and orchestra, *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, composed in 1916, performed in London in 1921, and published in 1923, mark an important date. For Falla writes music essentially Spanish in character, shaking off the 'Spanish' mannerisms which have afflicted so many others. He goes to the fountain-head to drink—not to rhapsodize about the quality of the water. His method is clear and direct; he draws his harmonic design squarely on the foundation of a serene, well-balanced outlook, without cloudy patches

or unearthly flashes of genius. He has no complicated ecstasies or mysterious murmurs in the orchestra; the pianoforte, used essentially as a solo instrument, gives the rhythm all the strength and continuity of a solid backbone, and the harmonies the life and colour of a guitar accompaniment.[1]

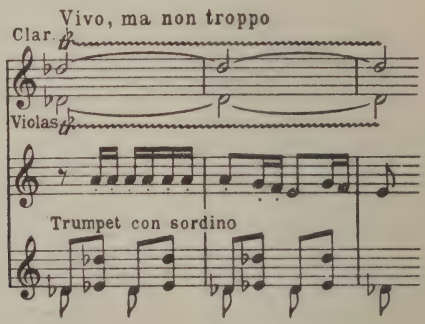
Spanish music had scarcely lifted up its head once more before it assumed a kind of patois—almost too pointedly in view of the cosmopolitan impressionism that lay just north of the Pyrenees. The *Polos*, the *Sevillanas*, the *Trianas*, the *Jotas*, in their uniformity of cliché, soon began to be as alike as one magazine cover to another. Falla reanimated these crude oleographs with a new and genuine popular feeling. The dance tunes took back their lively character in *En el Generalife*, their ecstasy and lyricism in *Danza Lejana*, their showy splendour in *En los Jardines de la Sierra de Còrdoba*.

Nevertheless, de Falla in his scores remains a student of French models; the orchestral colour is often no more than the residue of impressionistic technique; the sentiment is chilled by the pallid light of a waning romanticism. The scaffolding of the orchestration is built after the best French engineering principles, with those frequent divisions and reduplications,[2] that distribution of the sonorous masses so characteristic of works by Debussy or Ravel,[3] and the romantic days of exaggerated chromaticism, as in the following example:

[1] Manuel de Falla, *Noches en los Jardines de España*. Pub. Max Eschig, Paris, pp. 13, 27, 39, 49.

[2] De Falla, op. cit., p. 9.

[3] Ibid., pp. 21 and 54.

The recurrence of effects and colours beloved of impressionism is frequent—for example, the string tremolo on the *ponticello*, and the use of muted trumpets which—as frequently seems to be the case in the Spanish composers—have no relation to any real muting of the musical thought.

Certain impressionistic redundances are to be found also in that almost flawless jewel, the score of the ballet *El Amor Brujo*, a work which, as J. B. Trend justly observes, may be considered as 'Falla's greatest triumph in the purely Spanish manner'.[1] It is not easy to establish the precise date of this work which had its first performance in 1915, was published in a pianoforte version in 1921, and in orchestral score in 1924. The episode of *El Aparecido*, for example, wavers between the influence of Stravinsky and that of the impressionists, from the opening combination:

onward to where it breaks into a melody supported by colour-effects of a familiar pattern.[2]

To what may be called the strictly Spanish group of Falla's work belongs also the other ballet, *El Sombrero de Tres Picos*, first performed in London in 1919; a work

[1] J. B. Trend, op. cit., p. 84.

[2] Cf. p. 20, op. cit. For other examples of obvious French derivations in the score of *El Amor Brujo*, cf. p. 40 ('Los sortilegios'), and p. 52.

rich in lively nimble music, of a crystalline transparency, yet inferior to *El Amor Brujo*, and also to the *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, as regards consistency of melodic quality. The secret is that in this ballet the popular Spanish colour tends towards that fixity and conventional mannerism which is ineradicable in many other musicians.

When the accounts have been squared it is possible to deduce, from the works of Falla which have been mentioned, that he has no direct inheritance of Debussian influences as Albéniz has; but on the other hand it would be a mistake to assume that Falla is a composer of such individuality as to be free from every external influence, or that he is to be hailed as the representative of a new Spanish musical idiom which is clearly defined and autonomous.

The *Fantasía Bética* (1919) is an attractive piano composition, for which Mr. Trend's admiration is comprehensible; but the exaggerated importance which he attaches to it—so far as to devote a whole chapter of his admirable book to it—is surely a mistake. The work, despite its indisputable charm, cannot in the last analysis overcome the dead weight of its own local colour, of that patois which is the curse of modern Spanish music.

On the other hand, Falla seems to realize what a weakness this failing is in his music, and with an audacious change of front he has managed to change entirely the development of his style. In *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* ('Master Peter's Puppet-Show') he abandons the conventions of provincial idiom, and seeks a new expressive field of wider boundaries.

Amid the spate of heterogeneous dramatic musical compositions of our day, *El Retablo* is a work of artistic maturity and assurance of technique. The subtle and witty episode recalling the caustic humour that created

the figure of Don Quixote finds a new form of life in the plastic character of a marionette-show which conveys the idea of illustration not pictorially but in movement. *El Retablo* is a book of pictures drawn from life—grotesque, amusing, never dull or obvious.

What the imagination has captured from the narrative of Cervantes is reproduced as a living picture. Here is the world of dolls with new life breathed into them—with the marionette spirit of spectacle turned into an artistic motive, a factory creation. *Maese Pedro* pulls the wires, but he himself is no more than a puppet who dances to the wires pulled by Manuel de Falla with the wry smile of a Cervantes. Tradition and modernity change places with bewildering speed.

Attempts have been made to put *El Retablo* on a full-sized stage; but it appears that at the Opéra Comique, even with the collaboration of the famous painter Zuloaga, the results were not encouraging. The reason may be guessed: to enlarge the scenic frame of this miniature spectacle is to destroy its whole *raison d'être.*

For a stage portrait of the *ingenioso caballero* of Cervantes, and to recapture the surroundings which reflect the world of his dreams, there was needed a veil of fancy as artificial and unreal as the world it represents; yet the reality of the satire must remain plastic and convincing. Characters of flesh and blood would produce an absurd effect if they had to strut about this fantastic world which lives only in the written word, and which falls naturally into the artificial spirit of a marionette theatre. Thus Falla, with an ideal spontaneity of impulse, free from the hampering influence of any preconceived theories, harmonizes the subtle and sceptical outlook of to-day with the national tradition from which he extracts the æsthetic kernel and re-creates a new spirit.

Apart from the purely musical point of view, *El*

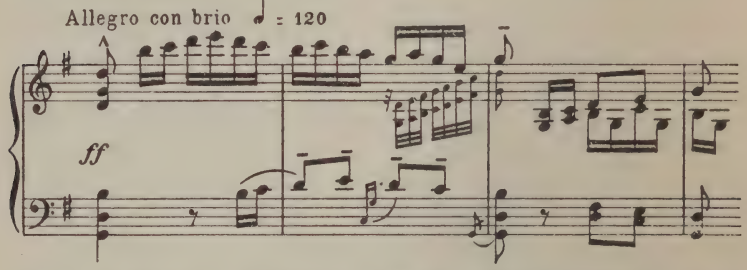
Retablo deserves to be considered as a theatrical phenomenon of importance. Music is not the directing impulse behind the work—it is only one of those elements which, in an intimate and reciprocal relationship with each other, build up the spectacle. In these times of tribulation in the theatre it seems rather an unkind joke of fortune to throw down from the skies a marionette drama that has all the rare characteristics of force and balance so lacking on the ordinary stage. It is perhaps to this that the attribution by some of such sovereign importance to the music of *El Retablo* is due. The score is marvellous in its harmonic variety and freshness, but it is no more than a comet which passes and leaves a trail of sparks. It is music which, separated from the frame for which it was destined, has no independent life.

The flexibility of a musical development which keeps pace with every dramatic change of situation or character, a subtle reminiscence of the atmosphere of Old Castile, the musical allusions to the romanesque and Catholic Spain of past ages—these are all elements of true art. They are clear and logical in the sphere of spectacle to which they belong; but they are not of themselves sufficient to provide for the dramatic essence of the work—as was discovered in the Italian productions of the Wagnerian music-drama, and as is bound to happen whenever the power of the musical style predominates over every other factor. With *El Retablo* the Spanish stage has gained a unique dramatic achievement, but Spanish music has not evolved an autonomous idiom.

Regarded purely from a musical standpoint *El Retablo* does not burst the old boundaries, nor does it rise to such heights (the nature of the programme, indeed, does not require it) as to temper universal qualities in the flexible reality of music.

Manuel de Falla has a genuine musical instinct, but

it is weak because it is easy-going; it does not compel him to one definite line of creative activity. He is not indifferent to the echoes of the old national spirit; the violent rhythms of Stravinsky,[1] and other of his contemporaries do not leave him unmoved, and at moments he echoes the self-conscious European neo-classicism, that typical post-war product which pretends to be an 'army terrible with banners' by waving old petticoats and banging the kitchen utensils.

This passage—the foundation upon which the finale of *El Retablo* is built—might have come straight out of Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

Falla's change of front, with his abandonment of the essentially popular and traditional forms for a more ambitious expressive idiom, is all to the good as far as he is concerned; but it is not a great step on the road to finding a solution to the problem of Spanish music in general.

In the 'Harpsichord Concerto' Falla, instead of concentrating his resources, has chosen rather to dissipate them. The good qualities which Señor Salazar notes in it are indisputable, but they are not welded together to make the work a whole. It is like the faces of some women, in which every individual feature is good—the nose Greek, the eyes blue, the teeth of ivory,

[1] Cf. op. cit. *Miren cuanta y cuàn lucida caballeria.* Chester, voice and pianoforte score, p. 40.

the hair rich and soft; but which leave no impression on the mind as a whole, while the images of other relatively ill-proportioned faces are stamped on the beholder's mind from the character and vivacity which inhabit them. Señor Salazar attributes certain other virtues to the 'Harpsichord Concerto', which can be crystallized in the critic's own phrase: 'formulas exteriores, de "fuera a dentro"'.[1]

The 'Harpsichord Concerto' offers a pleasant musical landscape to the listener, and the first movement, which surpasses the others, contains some tunes of very marked attractiveness. The opening phrases are fluid and smooth-running; the second movement has a clear-cut linear plan, which is full of delightful combinations of unexpected modulations. But there is no strength or essential unity of style in the work. It is a clear spring of water that bubbles away down the hill-side; you can drink of it, but not intoxicate yourself.

The celebrated 'renaissance' of Scarlatti and of the harpsichord technique as exemplified in this work is not as delightful or as amusing as it has been proclaimed. There is always something essentially false about these artistic 'resurrections'; although admittedly Falla is supremely successful at this kind of inspired imitation, an earlier example of which may be found in the *Sombrero*, with the dance of the Corregidor. In the concerto the phenomenon is, however, more remarkable. The third movement sounds ridiculously like a gramophone record of a Scarlatti work; and neither the modern harmonies which embroider it with leaps of the seventh, nor the clustered polyphonic development, nor other ingenious rhythmic inversions can modernize the spirit of it all.

The second movement is scarcely more satisfying to

[1] Adolfo Salazar, *Sinfonia y ballet, idea y gesto en la musica contemporanea.* Madrid, 1929, p. 233.

the listener; it has a solemn gait, a liturgical manner; and yet it is so incomplete, so introductory in character that when it ends the listener might be excused for thinking that the real movement was about to begin.

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Falla's art is noteworthy for its double character, uniting local colour with an organic sense of form. This is not to say that the latter quality is necessarily superior to the former. The attempt to widen the provincial horizon is a problem peculiar to contemporary Spanish music. But it is a tendency which brings with it its own limitations.

The Andalusian harmonic clichés remain the foundation of three-quarters of Falla's local colour. The original modes—folk-song and folk-dance—are omnipresent: the *jota* of Navarre, the *granadina*, the *fandango*, and the *Ferruca*, the rhythm of the *sevillana*, and the *bolero*. But the composer rises also to moments of exquisite originality with the dance of the 'Tenor' and 'Fuego' in *El Amor Brujo*. Nevertheless the style of this music never reaches that compactness which alone can sum up and express a collective idea or idiom through a single expressive personality. And on the other hand, as regards the forms which lie at the root of his musical experience, Falla is inadequately equipped for the loftiest type of expression. It is the old story—the fundamental dualism of Spanish musical idiom perpetuating itself through the centuries.

PAUL HINDEMITH

Born Hanau, 16 November 1895. Studied composition under Arnold Mendelssohn and Bernard Sekles at Frankfurt-am-Main. In 1915 was appointed leader, and afterwards conductor of the Opera House orchestra in Frankfurt. A famous viola player.

Principal Compositions

Op. 10. String Quartet in F minor.
„ 11. No. 1. Violin Sonata in E flat.
„ „ 2. Violin Sonata in D.
„ „ 3. Sonata for 'cello and pianoforte.
„ „ 4. Sonata for viola and pianoforte.
„ „ 5. Sonata for viola solo.
„ 12. „ 1. *Mörder* ('Murderer'). Opera in one act. 1921.
„ „ 2. *Hoffnung der Frauen* ('Women's Hope'). 1921.
„ 16. String Quartet.
„ 20. *Das Nusch-Nuschi.* Opera in one act.
„ 21. *Sancta Susanna.* Comic Opera.
„ 22. String Quartet.
„ 23. No. 2. *Die junge Magd* ('The Young Maid'). Ballad-cycle.
„ 24. „ 1. *Kammermusik* for string quartet.
„ 26. „ 3. Sonata for 'cello solo.
„ 26. „ 4. Sonata for viola and pianoforte.
„ 28. *Der Dämon* ('The Demon'). Ballet.
Neues vom Tage ('News of the Day'). Opera.
Cardillac. Opera.
Op. 36. No. 1. Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra.
Das Unaufhörliche ('Eternity'). Oratorio. 1931.

Paul Hindemith

PAUL HINDEMITH

THE study of Paul Hindemith, who is a characteristic product of the post-war outlook, can be identified with the whole problem of the new music. This special problem has nothing in common with the controversies earlier in the century, which were only the fag-end of the old romantic battles. They gave an excuse for the masquerading of charlatans who imitated Stravinsky without even having first been apprenticed by copying Debussy and Ravel. But the present problems of music are ones in which the critic and the creative mind play the part of public and performer.

To-day we are emancipated from the futile struggle over what is new or old in art, since it is felt that in art there is neither novelty nor obsolescence. The 'new music' must not be confused with the exploded myth of 'futurist music', which was not a problem worthy of serious study, but a cliché devoid of meaning. Whenever an original and powerful voice is heard for the first time it seems fated to be misunderstood; to be discussed and praised or condemned upon purely external and accidental characteristics. The 'music of the future', a commonplace of past history, is to be met with in every age, like the eternal conflict between tradition and innovation, between the established and the supplanting idiom. On the other hand, the problem of the 'new music' as regards its peculiar and individual features does belong essentially to our own time; it touches our conscience, since it deals with our own capacity or incapacity to create. As we ourselves tend to be 'new'

men, and not mere reproductions of our ancestors, so it happens in art, which is a living part of our humanity. In defining this problem with all its intimate and subtle implications, we realize unexpectedly our own æsthetic standpoint.

War, the physical expression of a long-drawn spiritual struggle, produces an æsthetic tension as severe as the physical tension of the fight. There is one fact in life universally admitted to be of paramount importance —death. Faced with the supreme moment, the sacrifice of life rendered necessary, voluntary, even impassioned by different sentiments, the human consciousness found itself, starved by sorrow, feeding upon its own personality, looking inwards rather than outwards for the elements of endurance and fortitude. The conception of a nation is, indeed, nothing more than the idea of the individual seen in proper perspective with all its myriad reduplications of personality.

It is thus that we find some explanation of why, after the war, artistic nationalism burst forth with such savagery and certainty of purpose. It was a nationalism which did not try to hide its artistic deficiencies by a sentimental brandishing of the national flag; it transcended the vulgar manifestations of propaganda. It stood for that instinctive movement of the stripped and buffeted soul inwards, towards its own hidden resources, clinging to its inheritance and environment and traditions like a child to its only toy. National values mean something more than the outcome of a long historical development and tradition, defined by its acquired character; for they imply a reciprocal relationship. The nationalist pedants are the worst enemies of nationalism; they try to separate the national quality from the other qualities in a work of art, to isolate it in an ivory tower as though it were too sacred to associate with the elements that give a work its character. If

they succeed in doing this, the flow of the national artistic life is stopped as though the blood had ceased to circulate in a human body.

False ideas of the part which nationality plays in artistic development have at all times set rivers of ink flowing. One of the most celebrated examples is to be found in the battles that were fought in Italy during the last century over the purity of language, the legitimacy of the historical novel, and the true conceptions of romantic and classic—the legacy of which is to be seen in Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* and *Il Sermone per la Mitologia*.

The end of the European War of 1914–18 found artists everywhere looking towards their national traditions, and the criticism of music from 1920 onwards forms the literature of this tendency. Especially in Germany did the movement find promising soil. If it arose naturally and unself-consciously in France with Ravel, among German musicians, with their uninterrupted and well-knit stylistic tradition, it became self-conscious and arrogant, ending in the chaos of a lost cause. Since the days of his adolescence, Paul Hindemith has been the best exponent of this mood. Music was in his bones from the day of his birth; he sucked it with his mother's milk. He is soaked in the musical tradition which has existed uninterruptedly in Germany ever since Schütz and Froberger brought it across the Alps from Italy. Hindemith is essentially a musician, even when his artistic results are least worth consideration. He is a man with a craft; he has his own 'mistery', and remains a musician even when he writes no music, just as a baker is a baker even out of working hours. Music is the natural medium of all his thoughts, as it was to Mozart. The sense of idiom and technique grow unconsciously in Hindemith, as the use of language grows in the child. He builds up an almost architectural structure—and

he uses the same sextant as the great John Sebastian. His superiority over many musicians who please the public far more than he does lies in the fact that, although he is as remote and self-contained as if enclosed by steel armour, he has invariably something to say once he opens his mouth, whereas others are vocal whether they have anything to say or not. Even at his worst he is a musician writing music, while their worst efforts are wildly unlike music, or indeed anything with meaning behind it. His music recalls irresistibly the word 'classical'—a well-worn word, which through careless use, especially in connection with music, has lost its real meaning in the popular mind. Leaving aside the purely theoretical associations of the word, a conclusion may be reached: that classicism means the reign of form which has been abrogated by literary and impressionistic romanticism. A tendency can be grasped in the music of to-day towards the freeing of the musical imagination from literary associations, from the symphonic poem and all other forms of pre-ordained drama in music. This tendency, represented better among Germans by Paul Hindemith than any other, stands for a return to the essential and intrinsic values of music. Musical expression must consist of an idiom forged with elements derived from music itself. The contents must be defined in their historical development by the logic of sound—hence the return to formal values—which, by the way, the schools, with their mechanical conservatism, have never renounced. This tendency, if it is stiffened into a doctrine, becomes absurd and presumptuous, and is christened objectivism. But considered in the immediate and practical aspects as part of an artistic life which makes it flesh of its flesh, it becomes an element of pure musical psychology.

In this Paul Hindemith's true worth is to be found; for his music is born out of this order of ideas. Form

and tradition are one to him: tradition is born into life in living form; form is the individual result of an historical process with the man of to-day, the *homo sapiens europæus* of the twentieth century on the summit. The positive side of his art is seen at its best in the Third Quartet, op. 22, and in some pages of the opera *Cardillac*. Hindemith showed that he possessed a firm and individual style from the beginning of his struggle in the artistic arena. In the group of sonatas for violin and viola, solo, and accompanied (op. 11, Nos. 1, 4, 5; op. 25, No. 1; op. 31, No. 1) (as a composer the viola suits him better than the violin), and in the First Quartet, op. 10, he shows himself open to organically constituted form; he moves in it securely as if in familiar surroundings. He does not waver, and he does not seek vaguely, but goes direct to his goal with an idiom that is mature, sharp, and resolute even when, as in the Quintet, op. 4, No. 2, for wood instruments, he does not transcend mediocre stylistic exercise. One must remember the closely-woven texture of the Second Quartet, op. 16; of the Fourth Quartet, op. 32; and the Trios, op. 34, for violin, viola, and 'cello: quickly-moving in the toccata, most original and diverting in the pizzicato, and formidably energetic in the fugue. Nevertheless, as often happens with Hindemith's music, the work gives a very different impression when it is read in score from when it is heard.

It would be a mistake to consider music of this type as an end in itself; in its formalism, which, artistically speaking, can never become pure formalism, and in its musical solidity, which suggests an irrelevant objectivism outside the subjective drama of the mind which brought it into being. If the ideal of the new music is in its withdrawal from the rarefaction of sound in literary images, and in the rehabilitation of the values of form, it is still true that this 'form' will have to have a

foundation in human reality, and not be extraneous to itself, reduced to a mere mechanical exercise. The danger of Hindemith's musical tendencies lies here: in avoiding the Scylla of extra-musical literary ideas he may strike upon the Charybdis of an empty and meaningless tonal gambit, a block of sound free from artificial stimulus, but also devoid of any meaning at all. The danger is a bitter reality to many musicians who have seen many a craft wrecked upon these rocks. In Hindemith's art there is an evil influence at work which often nullifies the good elements; the good and sane music he constructs with a firm and skilful hand is counterbalanced by his obstinate tendency towards formalism.

The outcome of it all is a musical idiom which is only partially related to the broad problems of musical art. There is a central driving force which gives the form a true character of its own by uniting its interior logic into an organic unit, but which is liable with use to become mechanical and empty. Form then becomes crystallized into a formula, and the play of sound into rhetoric.

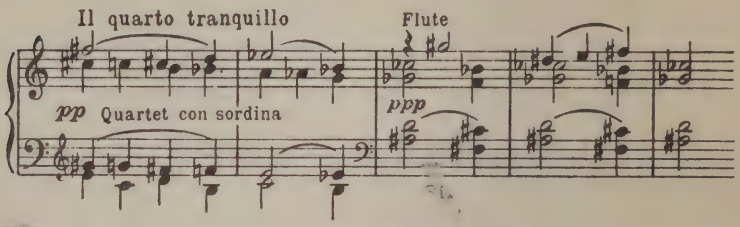
The tradition which drives him onward is no more than a tyranny of procedure; energy divorced from any human personality. Style is transformed into mannerism; and for proof there is no need to seek further than the piano music, op. 27, the last concertos, and the operas since *Cardillac*.

Many nowadays welcome the signs of this victory of the craft over the personality of the craftsman, and talk glibly of a renaissance of the guild spirit in art as in industry. They do not see that their pseudo-æsthetic pleasure is derived in great part from the physical pleasure of change, and is akin to sporting exercise, the muscular work of building or shaping an edifice; it is really a process of manufacture rather than a work of artistic creation. There is no reason why the dynamics

of muscular exertion should not add another exercise to the repertory, or that a new product should not be added to industry; but in that case it is time to close the book of art and dissolve the meeting; the whole venue has been changed.

When rhythmic activity is no longer the image of the spirituality from which it springs, but the actual definition of a spirituality which finds in it its purpose and its end, then we can speak no longer of music, but only of gymnastics. There was a time when musicians stole the thunder of the orator and talked to the mob; to-day they turn for inspiration to footballers and speed-kings. The work of Hindemith is imbued with a lively spirit that has something in it of mechanics, something of motoring and boxing. From this contrast in the spiritual dispositions of the author one could only draw negative conclusions if Hindemith did not, at times, put against the mechanical objectivism of his musical taste such a vigorous reaction as to resolve the contrast into a true and profound dramatic expression. It is true that his music has made people talk of classicism and objectivity, but it does not follow that it must necessarily be limited by the inanity of these terms.

If the Concerto, op. 36, No. 1, for piano and orchestra may be taken, apart from its character as a witty and spirited potpourri, as a typical example of what we have defined as a stylistic exercise, it must also be remembered that the author has written work like *Die junge Magd* (op. 32, No. 2), which in some parts is inspired by a delicious poetic feeling, and also the very moving finale of *Cardillac*. In *Die junge Magd*—a little poem in six parts, for voice and a few instruments—tonal contrasts are harmonized successfully in the distribution of the parts through which runs a penetrating and persuasive vocalism. Let us note the beginning, at the same time full and delicate, with a flute entry that

provides a counterpoint which has the abandon of pure song; then the clarinet (and later the voice) singing always a real part—but one endowed by its own musical figuration—and never forgetful of the logic of its verbal expressiveness. No. 2 presents a dialogue of moving abandon between the muted viola and the flute; No. 6 has a string movement that is at the same time tranquil and velvety in texture, so that when the singing begins [1] the voice finds the true atmosphere of its soul.[2]

In Paul Hindemith's music the values of construction and volume require an essential preponderance, but only when they are animated by the subjective force of creation do they rise to the level of an authentic artistic worth. The Third Quartet is decidedly the best of the four, just because its form integrates its being; the virtuosity is impregnated by its musical spirit, the counterpoint gives life to pages of irresistible emotion.

The music of Hindemith is the expression of a dualism which has no solution implicit in its contrasts. On the one side the spirit of objective construction, supporting the neo-classics and the partisans of the 'return to form'; on the other an extreme individuality which tends to self-realization, finding its chief obstacle in the fact that the assimilated elements are not combined

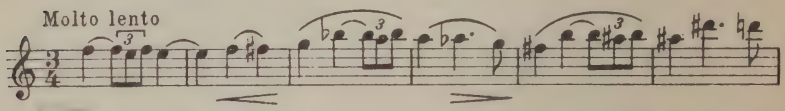
[1] *Abends schweben blutige Linnen.*

[2] Compare also pp. 20 and 21, the beautiful combination of flute, clarinet, and voice.

so as to lose their heterogeneity. There are disparate and strident contrasts between the square-cut form and the élan of the lyrical impetus, between polyphony and song, between tonal harmony and conflicting polytonality. The German of the twentieth century looks towards the German of the eighteenth century, wishing that history could be a mirror, and in the torment of calling forth what is deepest in himself through the spirit of nature, breaks out in a cry of superhuman grief. Hence the phenomenon, even when artistically false, cannot fail to interest us since it reproduces in living form our souls, the souls of modern men for whom too often the dream is stronger than the reality. There is a correspondence between the drama of Hindemith the musician of the twentieth century and the tragedy of Hindemith the German of 1922 with a lost war, an occupied Ruhr, and a discredited currency. There is conflict and despair, formal reflection, and subjective reaction. There is a national conscience which sees itself individualized, but in a crisis, grasping the traditional scheme as the only support which can provide any assistance. There is also the modern man of the twentieth century, conscious of his responsibilities towards himself and towards history. When Hindemith was born into the world of music, the christening was saluted by a concert of cacophonies, and while the pastor was putting on the surplice to begin his comments on the gospel of Bach's fugues (*statio fidissima* in all debates on style) his ears heard clearly the wild and profane orgy of the *Sacre du Printemps*. Will he be able to free his mind of those memories and exchange the present for the past, harmonize the religious and nationalistic conscience of a German of the Reformation period with the chaotic and revolutionary will of a fanatic of the Third International?

Thus was born *Sancta Susanna*, a monstrous and genial

work, in which drama and music are cemented by bitter gall and honey from Hymettus—a thematic exercise bathed in tears; a short, closely-knit drama of a convulsive and incomprehensible symbolism. Music is held on the same level as the drama, and the whole musical drama resolves itself in the adventures of the single theme—a tragic protagonist, tormented, and tormentor. This theme is so musically intense and pregnant as to be the only one on which the score of the opera rests.



The dialectic life of this theme ferments with a delirious cacophony: the ninths, elevenths, thirteenths become a deafening electricity; they crawl in close formation like contrapuntal serpents.[1] This frenzy can be understood in a musician of his age and heritage; but it leads Hindemith to a veritable mania. *Sancta Susanna*, however, gives us moments of sincere dramatic eloquence.[2] In the course of his speech the musician finds no obstacle; he goes forward, yet hesitates between the aggressive gait of a barbarian and the refined mastery of a classic. There are visions of antiquity re-evoked in the soul of a modern man. The work, however, is leaden and ugly, just as the religious sadism of the protagonist is irreverent and bestial.

The same fermentation of complicated and contrasting tendencies, impregnated with culture, the same blend of the past and of modern instinct, is at the bottom of Hindemith's works for voice and instruments, as in the *Marienleben* series. Here he has turned towards John Sebastian Bach, but the work is tinged with greyness

[1] See score *Sancta Susanna* (Ed. Schott), pp. 18, 60 *et passim*.
[2] See p. 30, No. 13. Also the thematic development from pp. 51–9.

by the sad melodies and disconcerting harmonies. The small cantata, *Die Serenaden*, op. 35, composed on a romantic text, for soprano, oboe, viola, and violoncello, is less consistent, but important as an illustration of Hindemith's tendencies. The duet for viola and 'cello deserves close attention; it includes a *prestissimo* of a luminous rhythmic energy, to which, repeated in its entirety, is added without any effort of adaptation, the part of the soprano and of the oboe.

The same atmosphere of moral discomfort of *Sancta Susanna* appears, with better matched harmonies, in the *Kammermusik*, op. 24, No. 1, with that finale '1921' which is like the demonic laughter of a pessimist. A spiritual tendency which manifests itself as more self-concentrated and powerful appears in the Concerto, op. 38, for orchestra, with string movements of a timbre as grey as iron. After this there is no room in Hindemith's music for that pathological humour of coarse persiflage which found its ugliest expression in the '1922' Suite, op. 26, for pianoforte.

Of the group op. 24, the best is the *Kammermusik*; a true *Sturm und Drang* of the twentieth century. It consists of feverish themes, always tense, thrown about in a hurricane of sounds; there are cries of despair which reach us smothered by a wind of madness. The wood instruments, in the short, sad *adagio*, complain together in a *cantabile* as squalid as a vision of the steppes, or rather (for a German of the new generation) like the horizon of the future after defeat. It is a crisis of grief in which tears are transformed into grimaces, exasperation becomes contortion and passion mad laughter; a joy bitter and unseemly like trivial sensuality; a greyish fatality which reminds one of certain scenes of Andreiev. While the wood instruments lament in a sort of chromatic weeping, the trumpet blurts out the tune of a fox-trot. The strings keep the temperature low and the atmosphere

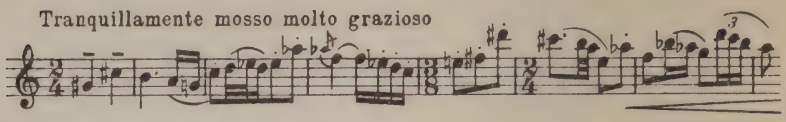
dark, with their rapid triplets of a sonority that is suffocated by polytonal dissonances. And despite this tension of the spirit, the rhetoric is always sober and intelligible.

We come lastly to *Cardillac*, an opera in three acts—the first true theatrical essay of Hindemith after the three single acts *Mörder*, *Hoffnung der Frauen*, op. 12; *Das Nusch-Nuschi*, op. 29; and *Sancta Susanna*, op. 21—which should be considered rather as attempts of divergent character and uncertain results, like the operas which came later—*Hin und Zurück* (which is merely bizarre), and *Neues vom Tage*, in which the news of the day resolves itself into many old items.

In Hindemith's works *Cardillac* occupies the central place. It takes its title from the name of the protagonist, a pathological subject who appears against an historical background which is only faintly defined. Cardillac is a French goldsmith of the seventeenth century, a veritable magician with his tools, a sort of Benvenuto Cellini, who, however, has lost his reason in his artistic exaltation. Cardillac is the opposite of that old sculptor in Pirandello, who detested the immobile figures his thumb had modelled; on the contrary he derives all his *raison d'être* from his precious creations, which are for him the only reality. Because of this passion he does not stop at murder, and stabs in the head any one attempting to possess himself of one of his gems. Homicide becomes to his distorted mind an act of heroism. Meanwhile the town labours under the incubus of an unknown criminal; the exasperated crowd sways between suspicions and accusations, but it bows before Cardillac, the master honoured like an idol and pitied like a martyr. This is revealed at once in the beginning of the opera from a thickly-woven choral and symphonic picture, and from the story told to the lady by the enamoured gallant. The picture is im-

pressive. 'A buyer goes to Cardillac, and returns with his heart rejoicing, having bought an object of great beauty. Suddenly he hears a humming all around, the very air is full of the sound of throbbing, a shadow comes forward from the back. The possessor of the gems, bemused by their beauty, confused and powerless, attempts to move. But the dagger is implanted in his neck. . . .' The orchestral comment uses the sinister colours of low timbres—the bassoon, bass clarinet, and muted brass. But the harrowing tale of the gallant has no other effect than to excite in the lady a burning desire to possess a casket worked by the master-hand of Cardillac. If her lover can bring such a gift she will give him her love. The proposal is not a trifling one, and the gallant's heart beats anxiously, as we gather from the agitated aria he sings to vent his emotions—a well-made, square-cut piece, but not very remarkable. On the other hand the scene between the lady and her lover in minuet time is excellent, very 'gallant', yet devoid of mannerism; it becomes convincing when the lover takes up the tale. The scene changes to the lady's bedroom where, while waiting for the arrival of the lover, she sings an agitated aria—musically not much out of the common. The gallant arrives, and shows by very evident signs that he is a man of his word. There follows a love scene in pantomimic form, from which we gather that the lady also is ready to honour her pledged word. Just as their desires are going to be satisfied the window is thrown open, and a black-clad, phantom-like figure appears. In a few seconds the gallant is stabbed, and the casket taken. The lady naturally faints, and the curtain comes down. This pantomime is, as music, one of the best episodes of the opera, and worthy in every way of special study. Two flutes, enveloped in the sonority of a discreet orchestra, evolve a suggestive and velvety duet,

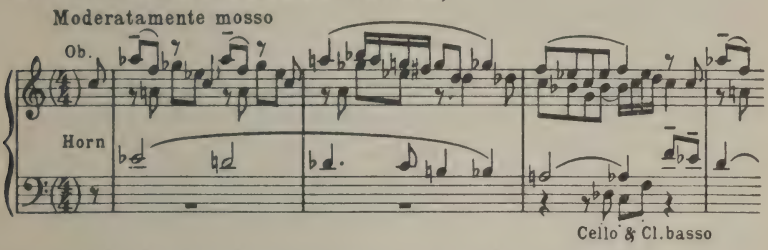
throwing to one another a delicate theme. The first flute begins:



to which are added muted 'cellos, the *pizzicatos* of the double basses and strokes of the triangles. Then comes the turn of the second flute, which reproduces faithfully the initial theme, while the first evolves round it a florid counterpoint. Violins and muted violas join in with plucked strings. The melody grows warmer, becomes almost caressing; it rises in tone like a verse of a love poem. The oboe enters; one hears the deep notes of the bass clarinet and the double bassoon sustained by 'cellos and basses, with a new design in B flat minor; the fluent line of the violins enters into the texture. It is all suave counterpoint, measured and thick, but without any luxurious or unnecessary display. The chief theme returns on the clarinets (in octaves), the bass clarinet and bassoon, while the flutes develop a canon, and the pizzicatos of the strings mark the time. It is a piece of masterly construction, and broadly developed, essentially musical, but full of dramatic life. Daring and originality blend in the right equilibrium of form.

With the second act we come in touch with the principal characters of the opera—Cardillac in his workshop like a priest in the temple; his daughter whom he regards merely as a custodian of his treasures; the officer enamoured of the goldsmith's daughter who is determined to win her. It is the psychology of the girl that interests us most in this household, and the composer is very successful in expressing it in the plastic aria which the girl sings accompanied by a *concertino* of violin, oboe, and horn. It is languid music, permeated with a

delicious melancholy, to which only one reproach can be made—that it recalls too closely the classical models on which it shapes itself. It is particularly full of emotion in the desolate ritornel,



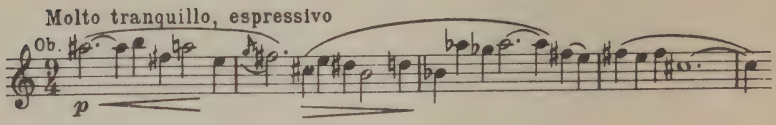
in which throbs the anxiety of a tender heart.

The officer asks for the hand of the daughter—which is granted—and also a precious necklace the goldsmith has finished—which is refused—and the officer in spite of the refusal takes the necklace and goes off with it, defying fate. Cardillac can do nothing more than let us hear once more the truculent aria of the beginning, and follow the daring youth.

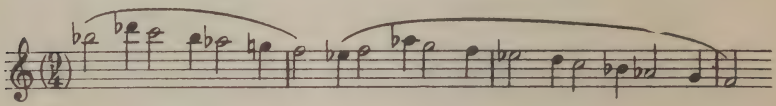
In the third act the knot has to be untied. The scene shows a street at night. In the background is a wine shop, from which come the sounds of tawdry music. The officer arrives, wearing round his neck the necklace; then comes Cardillac, who raises his weapon. But this time his blow does not reach the victim. He has been seen, an alarm has been given, and the crowd arrives. Cardillac is surrounded; he knows the assassin: let him speak. He remains fearless, and denies everything. The crowd grows suspicious. He denies and challenges. It is a dramatic duel. The crowd threatens to invade his house and sack his workshop. Cardillac is conquered. It is better to lose life. He admits that he is the assassin, but he does not repent; he is proud of his misdeeds. The exasperated crowd kills him. Then anger becomes pity. 'You have killed a hero,' says the

officer. One who seemed an assassin is now transfigured in death. A moving threnody for chorus, tenor, and soprano pays him a sorrowful homage, in the most beautiful page of the opera.

The oboe begins:



Then a velvety movement in octaves assigned to the strings accompanies the chorus:



All Hindemith is in *Cardillac*—all the good and the bad features of his temperament—a temperament of a revolutionary whom his country's tradition has domesticated—a bold and ardent musician, who is also a tenacious and inflexible builder; passionate at the right moment, but always ready to jot down counterpoints or weave fugatos. In *Cardillac*, which should be opera—hence, music—there is an extra-musical element which undermines the work of art; it is truly prejudicial that the opera should consist entirely of music. But the music, which is fluent and abundant, ends by leading the action by the hand without, however, succeeding in creating a formal, autonomous, and exhaustive construction—just because it cannot rid itself of the action, which is there living and actual, which has been the cause of its whole existence. In this opera there is greater musical work than in almost all the symphonic compositions of the same author, and yet the interest is but lukewarm. The problem consists in keeping aloof

from the conflicts of theories. When this is achieved the outcome is one of those lovely episodes of which mention has been made. When this does not happen, when music remains half-way between the operatic and the symphony, then we have only ingenious essays like the aria of Cardillac, which is too much in the grand opera style, or attempts at stylistic reconstruction like the quartet for soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass. The truth is that the duality of opera and drama weighs terribly on the conscience of the young German musician. It does not matter if the terms are not in their right place. Yesterday it was the drama which, with its hybrid symphonic recitative, outstripped music and broke its emotional powers; to-day it is music which in the guise of set form tends again to hide the action under its parasitic, formal afflorescence. In Hindemith's opera the true protagonist is not Cardillac, but counterpoint, and it could be equally efficacious if it did not make its appearance too often only as an historical device. When Cardillac and his daughter exchange tender sayings in the concentrated form of fugato [1] you feel very certain that the procedure has got the better of sentiment. When at the end of the act Cardillac is fatally urged on to a new crime,[2] the whole orchestral movement is determined by rhythmical evolution over a ground bass which encloses the same rhythmic cell used in the *Kammermusik*, op. 37, for purely pianistic purposes.

In the duet between the officer and Cardillac ('I want the loveliest thing you have created'), and similarly in the tragic dialogue between Cardillac and the crowd, in which the form is that of a fugal variation, the superb musical edifice does not exhaust fully the dramatic situation. The reason is that the aria forced to be a

[1] Ed. Schott, for voice and piano, p. 84.
[2] Ibid., p. 116.

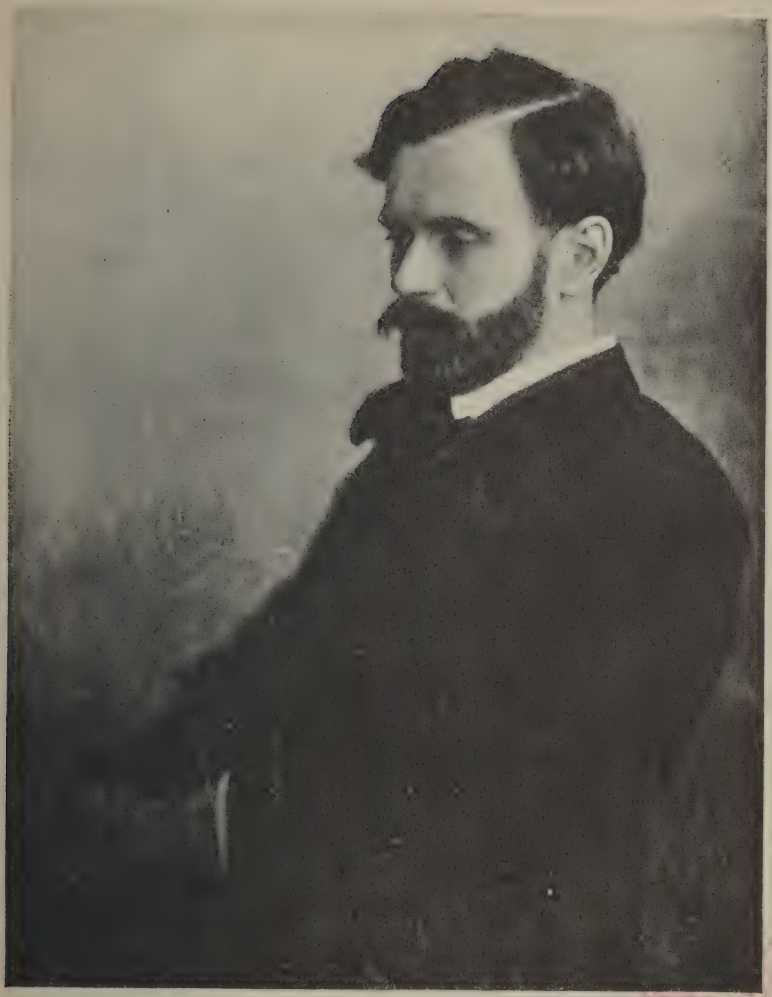
real part of the ensemble ends by forgetting that, together with the counterpoint, there is another element —the personage. As long as the intention is a volitional element outside the act of creation, there is little to choose between musical drama and opera-music. The theories of the music theatre are vain shadows. But one reality endures: one which is full of lyrical fervour and human emotion, and forges its shape with an immediate and unconscious ingenuity of form; and it is thus, fortunately, that Hindemith concludes his opera.

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Born at Kecskemét, Hungary, 16 December 1882. Studied composition under Hans Kössler at the Budapest Conservatoire. Founded a collection of about 3,500 Hungarian folk-tunes. In 1906 was appointed teacher of composition at the Conservatoire in Budapest. He was and still is a critic, writing for Hungarian and American musical papers.

Principal Compositions

Op. 1. Sixteen Hungarian songs. 1907–9.
,, 2. String Quartet No. 1. 1908.
,, 4. Sonata for 'cello and pianoforte. 1909–10.
,, 5. Two songs with orchestral accompaniment. 1912–13.
,, 7. Duet for violin and 'cello. 1914.
,, 8. Sonata for 'cello solo. 1915.
,, 9. Songs with pianoforte accompaniment. 1914–15.
,, 10. String Quartet No. 2. 1916–17.
,, 11. Seven piano pieces. 1917–18.
,, 12. Serenade for two violins and viola. 1919–20.
,, 13. *Psalmus Hungaricus* for tenor solo, chorus, and orchestra. 1923.



Zoltán Kodály

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

The present age is one in which music feeds greedily on folk-lore. There is, indeed, a great pleasure to be found in tapping the source of popular melody, and it is a pleasure that is easily and cheaply won. To tap this pure spring seems to be, and in many cases has actually been, a prophylactic against the parasitism, the weakness and the pedantry of modern music. The purification of the creative impulse, from contact with its fragrant and unspoilt origin, comes like a breath of fresh air to every musician who has been nauseated with the vagaries of music since the end of the nineteenth century.

The example was set in Russia, where Moussorgsky's music originated in the composer's consciousness of his national heritage and character, of the origins of his life and its community with the men of his race. But the destiny which awaited this outflow of simple, uncomplicated emotional expression was a tangled one. Even the natural flowers that grow freely in the untilled soil turn pale and colourless when they are cut from their stem. And so it was with the popular melodies, when they were brought into contact with a sterile, soulless, and enfeebled musical tradition, already badly gnawed by the academic moth. There arose a 'school of popular music' (strange contradiction in terms), as there grew up a 'school of jazz' later on, and as there had already grown up, in the early years of the present century, and under the influence of Debussy, a 'school of tone-colourists'. Alas for folk-song, no longer springing up spontaneously, but laboriously cultivated and

trained in the correct ways of growth! It was promoted to become one of the regular weapons in the musician's armoury.

The bastard and feeble romanticism of the neo-classical composers was a purely scholastic attainment, but it had not finally supplanted the genuine lyricism which, from Weber to Schumann, had been a veritable springtime of music throughout Europe. Too many clumsy critics have confused the spurious romanticism with the true. But the distinction must be made, the real jewel separated from the imitation, and real folk-music from mere academic folk-lore worship.

It was, unfortunately, only too natural that the splendid characteristic flavour of traditional songs, once it came in contact with outworn rules and inventive power, with the vulgarity of the realist composers, should have been utterly lost. The narrow imagination of professional hacks had already abused romanticism, making it a mere mirror of their own incompetence. Then they turned their attention to the accumulated musical treasure of past ages, a treasure hidden in the hearts of a people. But it is useless to turn back to old models and copy them slavishly unless one has first suffered a change of heart. This was shown clearly enough when the old-fashioned purveyors of musical melodramas began to imitate Wagner. They produced only that phenomenon which is called rhetoric in music —a modern façade to a shabby out-of-date building.

The abstract question has been raised whether a composer is ever æsthetically justified in making use of borrowed folk-tunes. It is a question which is not worth discussion, for the reason that an artist's method is not subject to standards of legitimacy. His end must be his sole justification. On the other hand, the legitimacy of that brand of criticism which satisfies itself with identifying some fragments of popular songs

and dances in a composition, and then unhesitatingly pronounces it good, since it is drawn from pure sources, may be well called in question.

It would not be worth pointing out these blunders in contemporary music criticism were it not that they have done great harm. A clumsy patcher-up of scores need only make use of a few maltreated popular melodies to be acclaimed as an artist in some circles. The most unoriginal and unimaginative brain can plunder the national treasury of songs. It is the musical equivalent of the cinema in art—a kind of gramophone craftsmanship, not true creation. These betrayals of art, due not so much to real ignorance as to the commercialism that pervades theatre managers and concert agents, are blunders, but commercially successful blunders.

There is a lighter side to the picture. It can be found in Zoltán Kodály, an authentic Hungarian national composer, unexploited by 'big business'. The æsthetic key to his work lies in the practical and concrete reaction of the individual's sense of nationality upon the collective national spirit of which it is a part. Kodály is not one of those who take up musical composition as they might take a ticket for a sweepstake, and who rummage in the musical patrimony of their race for bric-à-brac to sell second-hand. Nor is he one of those who cover up their own inability to forge a melody in their brain's workshop by stealing someone else's theme, nor of those who pilfer folk-song only because the laws of copyright effectually prevent their stealing contemporary ready-made music.

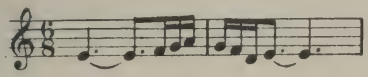
Kodály has a mind stamped with the impress of his inheritance and upbringing. He writes Hungarian music as naturally as he talks the Hungarian language. His instincts, his raptures and sorrows, all the keystrings of the brain are felt and expressed in the characteristic tones and colours of his own race. We can say that his

music is popular in the sense that what springs from the people, their life and thought, must be popular. And it is since he is himself a part of the freely-moving national life, and he has its tradition in his bones, that his compositions are so full of the vigorous modal characteristics of Hungarian music. He presents to the hearer those characteristics of racial origin, which never become obscured or attempt to reach a sham up-to-dateness; they are traditional and present-day at once, since they never change their essential nature. And as they are of a deep spontaneous humanity they never need know the pain of staleness, of being obsolete.

Kodály is, it may be said, a Hungarian before he is a musician; inasmuch as the musician in him bears the stamp of that national individuality which to him is the 'state of nature' that becomes the state of mind. His expression is a true language. It bears no trace of that intellectual dilettantism which, devoid of real content, tries to find shape in a welter of artificial imagery; of that saccharine top-dressing with which sham artists generally mask their shameless pastiches, and which the grammarians of a previous age called the 'veneer of style'. The music of Kodály always marches uncompromisingly to its point—untamed and yet full of subtle feeling; clever and prolific, open and unbiased. In the nineteenth century it was only the Russians who had the secret of this direct speech. Kodály, from his earliest works (which appeared in 1909), showed that he had found his own path, and ever since he has trodden it with an unfaltering step. He walks untroubled past his native fields, plucking the well-known flowers to make garlands, with a keen and unaffected pleasure, a frank unsecret voluptuousness. To choose a few of the best blooms from the bunch: take the Sonata for 'cello and pianoforte, the Sonata for violin and 'cello, and the 'cello Sonata. A close, almost

unfathomable balance has grown up silently and naturally between the set form of these works and the lyrical impulse which inspires them. Modern criticism may well be exercised by the study of how the spirit of song dominates this composer, holding him with so tight a grip that he never slips into the morass of mere rhetoric. It is essentially in its vocal line that Kodály's music takes unto itself wings—a vocal line that never flounders or falters in romantic altitudes, but rises clear and unaffected. Kodály seems always to be singing in the open air, with his face uplifted to the deserted skies.

The first movement of the Sonata for piano and violoncello is called a 'Fantasia'. Perhaps this is because the composer felt the urge of freer fancies than could be contained in the square-cut pattern of the sonata, and the title 'Fantasia' seemed to offer a wider scope. The 'cello opens *adagio*, and very softly: the piano, once the theme has acquired more strength and character, breaks in sharply and incisively. Calls like those of a distant fife sound faintly; the echo of an old traditional song falls on the air as a petal falls gently from a dying flower:



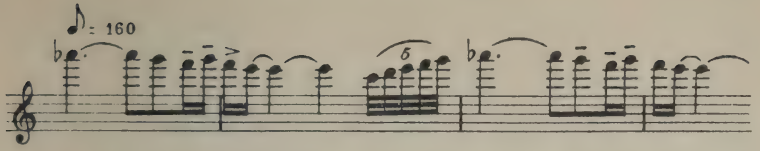
This miniature theme, so short and unpretentious, has a lyrical stamp of its own. It develops with clear harmonic embellishments; and when the episode closes, another, more majestic and expansive in character, takes its place:

The 'cello now resumes the leadership; the atmosphere

is more excited, and the initial theme returns as if transfigured with enthusiasm, in the shape of a connected dialogue between the 'cello and the pianoforte. The piano, as if murmuring to itself, whispers the melody gently—the same one which the 'cello had invested with such pomp and circumstance before.

The Second Quartet, op. 10, is cut somewhat after the same pattern. It has two movements, like the Sonata: the first slow, the second fired by a light dancing mood, but less expressive, more fragmentary and rhapsodical than the second movement of the 'cello and piano Sonata, and certainly inferior to the First Quartet, op. 2.

The *Allegro con brio*, the finale of the 'cello and piano Sonata, is a dance which at moments becomes wild and drunken—but without musical complications and super-structures, and without the usual vague flourishes. All the resources of this movement are to be found in its lively rhythm, in the musical instinct working free from external hindrances. The timbre and the characteristic melodic outline are elements which have a nature of their own, apart from their place in the general effect; and yet they remain subordinate to the rhythm of the work, and in harmony with it. It is a rhythm of two beats, quick, chattering, and inexhaustible in character. At times the initial thematic design, divided between tonic and dominant, becomes a pedal, and forms a base for the second part of the theme itself; the result is a delightful tone-picture.

The Sonata for violin and 'cello, op. 7, is notable for its lyrical quality. Together with the Sonata for 'cello and piano and the Sonata ('cello), op. 8, it expresses that personal and subjective feeling which in Kodály takes the form of rich, full melody. It is full of divinely melodic voices, that strive against each other in a wide current of song.

It is a broad melody of pronounced character, free from any suspicion of oratory or artificiality; the product of pure emotion, not of conventional mimicry of real feeling. The two instruments keep up a dialogue of perfect harmonic fusion, with a rhythmic skill which in the last movement finds its apotheosis in a plastic unity, a welding of truly symphonic elements.

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The 'cello Sonata attacks one of the weak points in the ordinary musical productions of the day. There are many musicians who enjoy using out-of-the-way combinations of instruments—just as in vocal music it has become a common practice to set to music noble and famous literary phrases which the musicians of former times have felt themselves unable to improve. A similar practice consists in making instruments play solo which from their construction and by traditional usage are always accompanied by some other instrument.

In truth these cases are not usually a natural solution of artistic problems. From the effect of such music it is evident that there is a real value in the novel instrumental combination or the use of a poetical text, because only through these instruments or these words can the composer express new sentiments. It is likely that this instrumental combination, or occasionally one isolated instrument, or these special words, owing to their poetical force, act as an external stimulus, and create of their own forces a new situation in the artist's mind. It then appears that the artist must have exhausted

his creative force when he chose the combination of instruments or the text to be sung; it is as if the artistic merit of a book ended with the design of its dust-cover.

Among the sonatas for solo instruments, which are daily produced by musicians in search of new stimuli, one notices too often a mere technical originality, a stylistic extravagance that is essentially meaningless; since the instrument is chosen from no intrinsic sympathy with the mood of the work, but only because it gives an out-of-the-way effect; because there is something quaint about its performance of an unusual role.

But Kodály's 'cello Sonata is not amongst this repertory of abortive oddities. The free and expansive mood of the work has nothing in common with such twisted ingenuity. His is a mind which expresses itself through balanced and delightful forms; it never degenerates into mean literature or into the affectation of primitivism. And the artistic restoration of the art of the Primitives, among the many good things it has brought to light, has given rise to a pernicious habit of using primitive forms as canons of all art.

Kodály's lyrics are miniature jewels of technique; the *Country Scene*, light and idyllic in character; *Nausicaa*, tranquil and mysterious; *Sad and Comfortless*, tense and dramatic; the *Love Song of Sappho*, op. 9; and the song beginning: 'Ewiges Blühen, Glorienglanz deinen Blumengeschwister erstrahlt', in which the tension in the vocal line expresses the joy of life in everything that grows and flowers; and the superb songs, op. 6, with the *Fragment of a Letter to a Friend*, so profoundly lyrical, and the two choruses for male voices, rich in local colour and feeling. Kodály's music becomes art when it captures in original forms a real emotion—it is the imprisoning of the fancy in a frame of rhythm and melody.

Kodály is not of those composers who degrade the

native idiom of music and dance into a commercially successful idiom, a potpourri of native characteristics for tea-shop orchestras.

Jazz, which had an auspicious beginning as a national idiom, was degraded by the Americans into a mere technique of grotesqueness. The Czechs, the Russians, and the Hungarians have all learnt to commercialize the tunes and rhythms on which they were brought up: even the Spaniards have turned their attention to fabricating commercial 'Spanish' dances. Kodály is one of the small band of composers who refuse to exploit their nationality in this way. His reserve in the use of his native idiom is shown best perhaps by the Piano Pieces, the Serenade for String Trio, and the Quartet, op. 10.

The same fastidiousness is patent in his largest works. The Two Songs for baritone and orchestra (op. 5), and the *Psalmus Hungaricus*, all betray a keen musical sense of values that has nothing to do with the indiscriminate worship of folk-song.

In the *Psalmus* (the fifty-fifth Psalm in the Hungarian MS. of the sixteenth century) the chorus is used in contrast with a tenor solo. The chorus opens with an impersonal narrative, but soon it becomes imbued with a single personality. The drama is heightened by the soloist, who now takes the lead from the chorus. A glowing and passionate melody takes shape ('And I said, O that I had wings like a dove').

When the sinners are named who have plotted the downfall of the innocents, a cry arises from the women —a wordless lament, imitated by the orchestra which weaves an agitated figure below it. The cry swells until it dominates everything in the score and breaks out: 'God shall hear, and afflict them'. The soloist takes up the answer: 'Hear my lament, O Lord'. The dialogue becomes agitated, and is woven into the orchestral

texture until a triumphant return is made to the opening theme.

The monologue, 'But reassure my heart', is preceded by a tender introductory passage, in which a clarinet is distantly heard, and the violin follows with a whisper of silky arpeggios whose rhythm is softly beaten out like a hushed heart-beat—a song, a prayer, a meditation, and a dream in one.

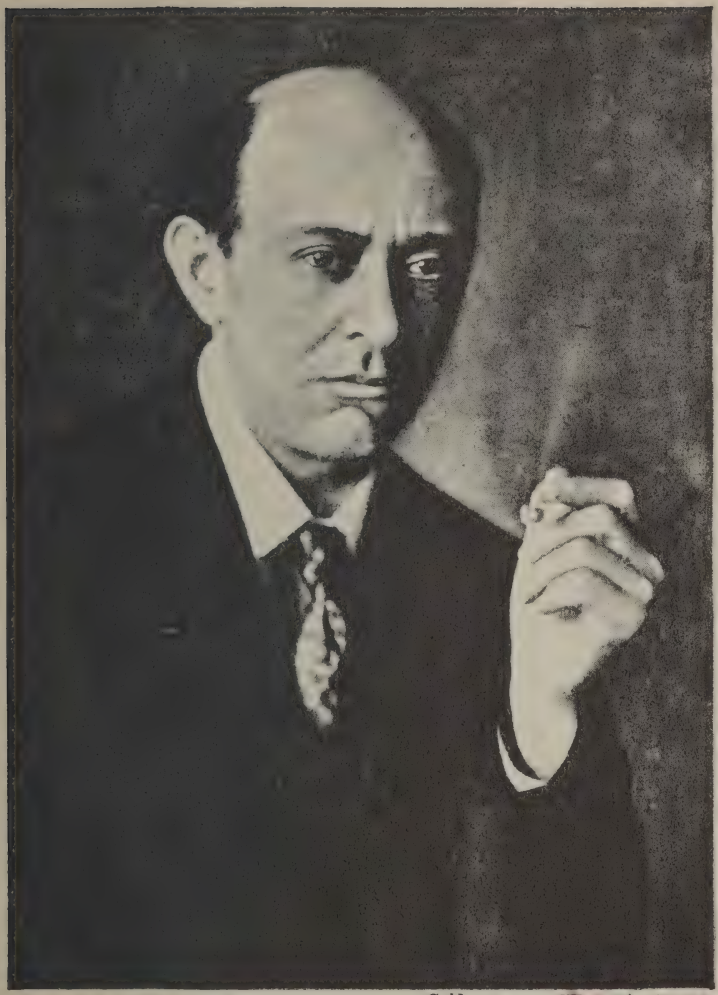
The *Psalmus Hungaricus* speaks of a religious emotion that is pure and sincere. It is not mere ritual, a lip service to ecclesiastical formulæ; it is poetry and mysticism which need no set forms, but express themselves freely and naturally, concerned only with the expression of a deep-rooted emotion. Kodály's music breathes a certain elemental quality of sadness, a tendency to discover itself fully only in the deepest pools of the stream of life—a sensibility which transfuses itself in melodies and harmonies almost superhumanly austere. The spiritual essence of the work is expressed by a severe yet passionate simplicity. It is a dream wherein we strive perpetually for a clear prospect of reality—a parable of the inner life wherein we all seek to simplify and purify our system of thought by the light of a wider humanity.

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

Born Vienna, 13 September 1874. Mainly self-taught, with a few months' study under Zemlinsky. In 1901 he married Mathilde Zemlinsky, his teacher's sister, and settled in Berlin as conductor of a literary variety theatre. He returned to Vienna in 1903, and began his career as a theorist and teacher.

Principal Compositions

Op. 4. *Verklärte Nacht.* String sextet. 1905.
,, 5. *Pelléas et Mélisande.* Symphonic poem for orchestra.
,, 7. String Quartet in D minor. 1905.
,, 9. *Kammersinfonie* ('Chamber Symphony') in E flat. 1906.
,, 10. String Quartet (with voice part) in F sharp major. 1910.
,, 11. Three piano pieces. 1909.
,, 13. *Friede auf Erden* ('Peace on Earth'). For chorus.
,, 15. Fifteen songs by Stefan George.
,, 16. Five orchestral pieces. 1909.
,, 17. *Erwartung* ('Waiting'). A monodrama or solo cantata for the stage.
,, 18. *Die glückliche Hand* ('The Lucky Hand'). A drama with music.
,, 20. *Herzgewächse* ('Flowers of the Heart'). For soprano solo, celest, organ, and harp.
,, 21. *Pierrot Lunaire.* A cycle of twenty poems recited to music. 1912.
Gurrelieder. For soloists, chorus, and orchestra. 1900–1.
Op. 23. Suite for pianoforte.
,, 24. Serenade. 1921–3.
,, 26. Quintet for wind instruments. 1923–4.
,, 30. String Quartet No. 3. 1927.
,, 31. Orchestral variations.
Jakobsleiter ('Jacob's Ladder'). Unfinished oratorio. 1915–17.



Schlosser and Wenisch, Prague

ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

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ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG, that tormented and tormenting spirit among musicians, demands much of his hearers when he expects them to appreciate his intellectual difficulties, but more of himself when he undertakes the Sisyphean task of lifting his heavy romantic personality above its natural limits. The apparent arrogance of his manner has set many against him; and yet he has but one tenacious adversary—himself. He is an obstinate fighter, but violent chiefly against his own nature; he is paradoxically proud of spiritual credits in a stock that, if he only knew it, was declared bankrupt in a very recent past.

As an opponent of romanticism—which is how he would describe himself—he is fighting towards a goal which he can never attain, owing to the intellectual blinkers which limit his range of vision. He believes he is clinging to the Infinite when he grasps a handful of dust. His greatest efforts lead but to the negation of personality. He might be a hero—if he were not a clown; if his style did not reveal an outworn romanticism *malgré lui*; and if in practice his music did not sound like a parody of Berlioz or Wagner.

Wagner and Brahms, each in his own way, had given the German world of music a formidable shock. Wagner, especially, paved the way for coming revolution. He paved the way, but the revolution was a mere fiasco, and German music failed to advance. The creative spirit contracted into a cultural one—wonderful in itself, but not progressive. The ugly and transient

aspects of Wagner are the only ones in which the disciples who followed him surpassed their master.

Bruckner, Mahler, Strauss, Stravinsky—what are they but fragments of nineteenth-century thought, which had been thrown sky-high by the revolutionary explosion? Many who saw them sailing through the upper air believed they were doing so under their own power, and took them seriously; but when they sank to earth like pricked balloons the world began to laugh. Bruckner fell by the wayside, and has been left there—unburied. Strauss, by good fortune, landed on a bleak mountain summit, and made himself so much at home there that people imagined he had climbed up in the legitimate manner. Mahler, poor Mahler, blown to shreds, never came down at all—not a trace of him was left, and the most that his devoted friends could do was to erect a memorial tablet. Schönberg, neatly somersaulting, fell into the lap of Aristophanes, and remained there.

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Let us consider Schönberg's works from op. 1 to op. 10. His destiny is clear from the outset, and he never escapes it. It is evident in the sextet *Verklärte Nacht*, so decorous and pleasing; in the symphonic poem, *Pelléas et Mélisande*; in the hyperbolic and congested *Gurrelieder*; in the straightforward Quartet, op. 7; in the *Kammersinfonie*, op. 9, which imitates the Strauss of the *Don Juan* period; in the many *lieder* from op. 1 to op. 8; throughout all that rich collection of tortuous commonplaces.

In the *Verklärte Nacht* the moon shines clearly, and the night favours a flowing style of rhetoric; in the Quartet in D minor the melody is set in motion in accordance with the strictest Brahmsian principles. Now these two examples typify more than any others that perpetual wavering between the closed form as improved by

Brahms, and the free symphonic idiom characteristic of Wagner, which afflicts Schönberg's development. The uncertainty is like the first signs of a fatal disease, evident in his earliest works.

Two utterly irreconcilable styles are represented by the opposing schools of Wagner and Brahms. The contrast between them is totally different from the classical contrasts of the nineteenth century, between Wagner and Berlioz, or Wagner and Rossini. In these latter cases there is a clash of opposing worlds, opposing traditions. But Wagner and Brahms share a common fatherland and a common artistic ancestry. Their conflict is one of temperament alone, and so is all the more bitter. Differing intellectual experiences lead them apart. Brahms's style has its roots in a strictly musical culture, in the purely internal evolution of a technique. In Wagner, on the other hand, musical genius is quickened by experience of a wider world, in which literary and political influences play a large part. Brahms is a descendant of that German romanticism which in his time was showing unmistakable signs of old age. His progress is laboured; yet he reaches his goal because he succeeds in reconciling the recent past, the age of Schumann, with the remoter yet still dominant epoch of Beethoven. But Wagner joins these same elements in the flame of the *Kulturgeschichte*; he unites Sophocles to Schopenhauer; beyond the mists of northern mythology he envisages a new synthesis of the arts.

It was an inherent weakness of creative power that prevented the new generation of German composers from steering a clear way between these two poles of German musical tradition. They had not realized the fundamental distinction between a musical form which was nourished on purely musical tradition, and musical form which sprang from a general culture. These men

had inherited great wealth, but instead of using it reproductively they merely exploited it blindly; they were spiritual profiteers. Their rich and complex technique had been too easily acquired for them to master all its component elements. Thus may be explained the hybrid Wagnerian imitations so noticeable in the symphonic works of Bruckner, Mahler, and later, Schönberg—men who could draw from the deep wells of history nothing but a barren didacticism. Their musical experience perfects itself in time, but the impulse never comes from within. They chew continually, but the body is not nourished.

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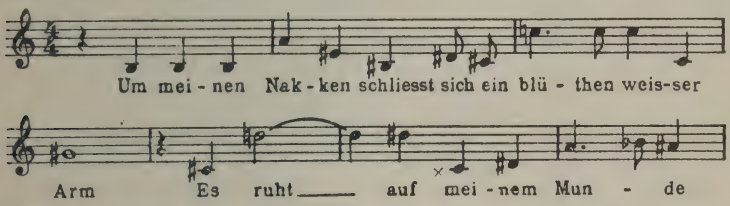
Schönberg, in his younger days, seemed to be a fine musician, with an almost unnatural sensibility—a veritable prodigy. But he never passed that stage. He is like a foal whose legs kick out wildly without ever managing to gallop. He glows with vitality, with the heat of the new revolution; but the moment that he starts to go to any definite destination his legs give way, and the old romantic torpor paralyses him.

Study, for instance, the Quartet in D minor. It is a model of what such a work should be—the parts are harmoniously divided, the tonality is fascinating; yet when all this is said, what an appalling absence of personality and of authentic experience are apparent! The composition and the setting are subjective; but the expression does not convey a true sense of the intellect behind it, of the mind which looks on, criticizing, calculating, and directing the course of the work. The composer can only be stung into warmth by rhetoric.

Now *Pelléas et Mélisande* is a model, the *Gurrelieder* a monument, of musical rhetoric. From them we can see what a burden this deficiency of Schönberg's is—weighing down the composer's musical consciousness

throughout his lifetime; a Dantesque cape of steel to punish his artistic hypocrisy. The commonest romantic mannerisms, the clichés of writers from Berlioz to Wagner perpetually invade his work and betray the 'quantitative' nature of his mind. The point at which Schönberg's romanticism really begins to collapse (the process has later become more rapid) is seen in his vocal writing. Musical declamation has always provided an infallible test for false æsthetic adventures. Let us open the *Acht Lieder*, op. 6. At once we find—Wagner, somewhat damaged in transit!



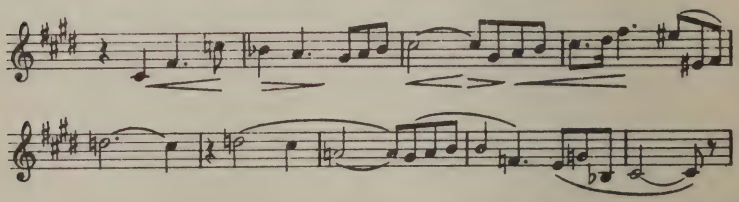
This leaping beyond the octave range, these sudden changes of register, are a corrupt inheritance from the Wagnerian intervals and leaps of the seventh. But even in Wagner vocal expression gained very little by this procedure. It is possible, however, that this degenerate form of the musical articulation of words has its *raison d'être* in the adherence to the genius of the German language, and hence its pronunciation. In Schönberg this tendency becomes ever more important and, in the end, the determining factor. The interval of the minor ninth is no longer a mere tendency, but the beginning of a system and the starting point for new modal aspirations.

In the Quartet, op. 10, the desire for a new and fantastic expression begins to stir in the darkness of a tumultuous consciousness which obeys no law. Spiritual imperfections develop into a deformed style, and a form which is neither a novelty nor an advance, but a hybrid

mixture. A special brand of vocal lyricism is added to it: a lugubrious sound which gropes between high and low notes without ever finding the stable balance that it seeks.

We are now on the threshold of 'expressionism'. The pieces for pianoforte, op. 11, are an exact translation into sound of that convulsive and monstrous æstheticism which Schering applied to musical 'expressionism'. Everything about Schönberg may be legitimately decried —except his logic. He is all logic—and in this lies his artistic doom. His pretended art is the logical consequence of a dogmatic premise. Schönberg the man staked everything on calling into life Schönberg the artist—but the artist was still-born. From this rebellion against nature springs all his originality; he is the protagonist of a drama from which there is no escape, and which culminates in the fever of the dodecaphonic system. Here begins the adventure of the real Schönberg, a pilgrim in the wilderness of tonal disruption. But his method can be traced in his early attempts, and the compositions from op. 11 to 30 are meaningless if we do not value rightly what went before.

Romantic melody in Schönberg's hands becomes utterly false, as this example clearly shows:



Among the reasons why Schönberg, a weary representative of second-hand romanticism, became gradually impressionist, atonal, and dodecaphonic, may be found also the explanation of his organic impotence as an artist. Yet this latter is almost a merit in him. For

Schönberg is not one of those moderns who bask in their own mediocrity as though it were a great cause. He is old-fashioned enough to feel the stimuli of progress and improvement. Even his bitter spirit of rebellion is derived from a frustrated romantic outlook—a derivation common to others as well, as is shown in practice by the noises made by astounded and malicious audiences in concert rooms, recalling the time of the 'great misunderstoods' of the nineteenth century. And the hisses and protests which greeted — without reason — the *Kammersinfonie*, op. 9, and the Quartet, op. 10, only confirmed Schönberg in the belief that he was a pioneer and a martyr. He felt in his bosom the wronged spirit of a Berlioz, and envisaged himself as a miniature Wagner. And as such indeed he appeared to his admirers and apologists who hastened to publish to the world the tale of his insignificant life.

In 1909 Schönberg gave to the public the *Buch der hängenden Gärten*, op. 15, for voice and piano accompaniment, to which he added an apologia whose substance was as follows: 'The melodies of Stefan George have allowed me to reach for the first time an ideal of form and expression which I had long desired. Until to-day I had neither the strength of mind nor the mastery of my medium to achieve it. But I am the slave of an internal power stronger than my education; it compels me to obey a conception which, inborn, has greater power over me than even any elemental artistic formation.'

He was quite sincere. In these words, however, there is a confusion in terms. What he calls an 'inborn conception' is nothing more than a laboured attempt to overcome that artistic mediocrity which could not escape his acute observation. And if he held that he had never previously attained the strength or skill to achieve ideal form and expression, it is solely because

he had never before experienced the desire—the itch—of making an impressionistic experiment. The contact of Debussy, however, on his heavy, anachronistic romanticism led to a desperate reaction.

Debussy, it is now admitted, was the determining factor in the musical history of the first quarter of the twentieth century. He belongs to the artistic period which has been called *estetizzante* — the 'æsthetic' age. In this phase the lines of motion, the surge of harmonies which clash only to blend, and all the sense of constriction and of thematic 'dialectics' are abolished. Sensibility dictates the consideration of each movement in itself. Debussy's harmonies are freed from the laws of extension. Sound becomes the equivalent of colour and the concord of sounds is like a concord of colours belonging to a self-ordained gamut. The principle of development disappears; the musical spirit lives by its own pulsation, which is of the moment. Thus the sense of tonality is dimmed, and also the technique of harmony, which can now rise and fall by means of the semitone where tonic chords merge in chords of the seventh and the ninth. These developments taught Schönberg, burdened with all his romantic luggage, that he must face a crisis in the traditional principles of harmony. He lost his head.

After the Stefan George songs, and the sterile venture of *Erwartung*, it was Maeterlinck's turn. *Feuillage du cœur* (*Herzgewächse*, op. 20) for soprano, celesta, harmonium, and harp, provides the classic example of Schönberg's stylistic horror. It is a perfect carnival of sound—cacophonies born of misunderstood spiritual desires, a blend of every revolutionary idea, the last stage of a fatal disease. It is pre-war Europe at its last gasp. A hundred battles had to be fought and thousands of lives sacrificed to wash away the stain of those sins against the spirit.

But Schönberg, nothing daunted, carried on his Sisyphean task. His labours began again, starting this time from the other end. If the negation of tonality had been leading him directly to cast aside melody and development, the romantic origin of his instincts drew him relentlessly towards a new valuation of form. The play of irreconcilable antitheses was drawing to a climax, and he was at the same time impressionist and polyphonist, experimenter and pedant. The summary, the true product of it all is *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Among all Schönberg's works *Pierrot Lunaire* is the most significant, and the one in which the heterogeneous elements of his indefinite personality are best organized. Here is a polyphony which is counterpoint in convulsions; a chromatic blend of basic tones, constituting the *Quartenakkord*, a slapdash impressionism; a restless vocal music, that stands half-way between intoning and recitative, giving the impression of an unreal, fantastic pride in empty ingenuity and ingenious pedantry, of provoking paradoxes, the fanciful imaginings of a lunatic; the drunken gesture of a learned professor! It is a perfect Cockaigne of contortions, of sneers, sobs, laughter, of tears cynically swallowed, of a mixture of melodies and rhythm which end in the same mocking grimace. What a paradox of virtuosity! To-day *Pierrot Lunaire* seems a ghost from another world. If our senses had not been blunted by the hard realities of the war we might still feel the fascination of lyrical sentiment melted away by the heat of rhetoric, and of all the vagaries of a prolific but treacherous and unhealthy musical instinct. But now it seems merely the cry of a sorrowful soul rushing towards the precipice of a dark future.

In spite of all its musical perversity *Pierrot Lunaire* has an historical value, since it sets the seal on fifty years of delirium tremens of European art. It is the last scene

in the drama of the contemporary spirit which, beginning with the poetry of Baudelaire, ends in the mystic carnival of Schönberg. It is the revenge of ill-treated and frustrated romanticism, which out of spite shouts gibberish at its tormentors; of real romanticism which had been blended with spurious sentiment. True romanticism had only counterfeited death; and the undertakers, the students of the subconscious and psycho-analytic in art, believing it dead, had called upon *Pierrot Lunaire* to sing the De Profundis. But the supposed corpse of romanticism was very much alive; it has risen and destroyed the ghouls and grave-robbers.

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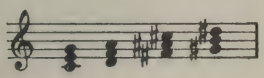
Schönberg had nothing left but to throw himself into dodecaphony. Dodecaphony is a vale of tears where Schönberg does penance for his impressionistic sins. He goes to his Canossa armed with formal construction and melodic 'structuralism'. But he cannot go back to the traditional octave. He has available no longer the venom of the diatonic series, which can be altered at will, of major and minor. In the new scheme twelve chromatic notes are to be used on condition that not one of them will be repeated—not even the first—in fact, the first far less than the others. Free sounds—independent of each other—defined in their acoustic essence of equable temper: here is the secret.

The official exponent of dodecaphony is Josef Matthias Hauer, who has closely studied the so-called law of the tempered chromatic series of twelve sounds, and has evolved the possibilities of modal grouping in forty-four *tropes*. Hauer's *tropes*—the word is borrowed from Greek musical terminology—are groups of four notes destined to take the place of the traditional modes. The essential characteristic of the dodecaphonic *trope*

is that the harmonic progression no longer knows the sense of solution, and the chromatic relations of the twelve sounds have the same value when considered horizontally as vertically. Hence the basic form is a group of four triads, which together will give the twelve chromatic sounds.

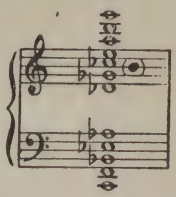
Within the bounds of this system the utmost liberty can be admitted—the most complex or the simplest chords can be easily inserted. Thus a certain *trope* can find resolution in no less than four tonal chords; all that matters is that the initial sound must not be repeated in the octave.



Hauer was clever enough to find a reward for his heavy and erratic labours; having learnt the art of dodecaphony he set it aside and gave himself up to the lucrative task of warming full-blooded romantic hearts with comfortable, sentimental effusions, as the discreet success of his chamber oratorio, *Wandlungen*, proves.[1]

Schönberg, on the other hand, after the failure of his romantic-impressionist expedients, embittered by the irresistible contrast between the pedantry of his stylistic instincts and the revolutionary tendencies acquired in the catastrophic atmosphere of the present world of music, threw himself without reserve into the arms of dodecaphony. He nursed the illusion of being able to reconcile this new, artificial harmonic temper with the dialectic spirit of classical polyphony and of ternary construction. The Debussian tendency to express oneself in sounds freed from any functional relation thus

[1] See J. M. Hauer, *Vom Melos zur Pauke* (*Eine Einführung in die Zwölftonmusik*), and *Zwölftonmusic*: *Die Lehre von den Tropen*, Universal Edition, Vienna. Erwin Stein: *Neue Formprinzipien* (in *Von Neuer Musik*), Marcan Verlag, Köln.

reaches its extreme point. The whole dodecaphonic system exists already in the *Quartenakkord*:

—twelve sounds which include the whole of the tempered chromatic series. Already in the days of the *Kammersinfonie*, op. 9, Schönberg was busy undermining the tonal structure. Now he industriously inserts in the texture harmonic parts derived from the relation of fourths, instead of the traditional thirds. In countless aspects of melodic development he twists a discursive cantabile into a dodecaphonic chromaticism, but the accumulated dissonances, in spite of growing distance separating them from their tonal centre, are in the end still attracted to it. Tonal dynamics, at first latent, soon becomes, with its clear resolution, the dominant factor. It is the contact with impressionism that sends Schönberg in the direction of atonality. From this it is but a step to dodecaphony, the principles of which are used for the first time in the Five Pieces, op. 23, for pianoforte; then in the Serenade for seven instruments, op. 24, in the Sonata for piano, in the Quintet for woodwind, in the Suite for piano and six instruments.

In the realm of dodecaphony the composer draws his material from the tempered voices of twelve chromatic notes, and disposes them in a tonal ensemble of his own invention, which becomes the basic form of the composition. The fundamental principles of the system are as follows:

Notes must bear no relation to any one base; their relation is purely reciprocal. Schönberg says: 'Zwölf

nur aufeinander gezogene Töne'—hence pure atonality, that is to say, complete negation of that basic point of reference (and starting-point of harmonies), which is known as the tonic (*Grundton*), around which in one way or another all sounds gravitate.

The fundamental harmonic series engenders other series derived (i) from its tonal opposite number; (ii) from the corresponding descending series; (iii) from the relative opposite number of the descending series.

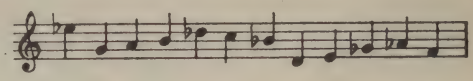
It is of primary importance to the system that these tonal series should expand not only horizontally, but also vertically, so that two or more voices meet in the manner of chords. Rhythmic motion is entirely free, and the octave does not constitute a limit in the progress of melody.

A tonal series, hence a melodic line, gathers importance independently of its rhythm. While in thematic development a rhythmic design has melodic variations, here a melodic form has rhythmic variations. In the classic method of elaboration of a subject rhythm gives shape to the melody; in Schönberg's dodecaphonic system the melody determines rhythm. The upholders of this theory maintain that the variation of rhythm is more radical than variation of melody, since the latter retains the musical character of the phrase while the former changes it completely. Hence a tonal series in Schönberg admits of changes far greater than those of a rhythmic theme.

Schönberg's dodecaphony presents a linear shape; contrary to the 'mode', which is harmonic, its nature is essentially melodic and reflects the polyphonic style from which it originates. Kurt Westphal's comment is as follows: 'The formal scaffolding which once consisted of harmony consists now of melodic development'.[1] For example: the Quintet for wind instruments, in

[1] K. Westphal, *Die moderne Musik*, p. 71 (Teubner, Leipzig, 1928).

which the laws of dodecaphony are integrally applied, is built on the following tonal series:



—notes belonging to the chromatic scale and drawn up in accordance with a particular modal scheme. Every move in this long composition is derived from a fanciful continuation of the series, and from the transformation of its elements—and thence come harmonics, developments, and figuration.

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But the complete application of the dodecaphonic system, first attempted by Schönberg with incomparable virtuosity, becomes in the end a useless piece of bravura —indeed, a bravura which often becomes bravado, a strain upon the listener's nervous system and power of endurance. Someone has remarked that Schönberg's dodecaphonic creations realize a power of melodic construction of surprising stylistic transparency. Doubtless they are essentially spiritual; but their spirituality is one-sided and halting. It is a mutilated imagination that would live for itself and in itself quite apart from that organic whole which alone is true spirituality. It is a contradiction of the very conception of fantasy and imagination, an artificial construction in which imagination instead of being at one with personality is reduced to mere mechanical ingenuity.

Schönberg's dodecaphony is a personal attack upon the procedure of classical harmony. Harmony, melody, and rhythm are considered by him as universal entities instead of as the abstractions they are. There is something ludicrous about the claims of writers who have attacked or defended the stylistic systems of the day,

magnifying the excellence of the new plan by contrasting it with the mediocrity of past systems or upholding the excellence of these against the fallacies of the moderns. For harmony is a fact, an *a posteriori* fact, of which we must have knowledge for reasons of method. It is a light that should lead us in the hard ascent towards the soul-spirit of form. But it is not finality. It is a subordinated value *in partibus*; it is an element, not a whole. Expression is found in technique, but technique is not expression. A Beethoven symphony is in tripartite form; but tripartite form does not constitute a Beethoven symphony. Debussy's true artistic vision lies in his new harmony; but this harmony is not all the art of Debussy. Schönberg, on the other hand, is utterly absorbed by this technical harmony. All his activity is bent in that risky venture, the experimental destruction of the tonic. He achieves a mobility of tonal planes which makes the head swim. His are formidable constructions, but wanting in lyrical coherence because there is behind them no perceptible personality. The real, the genuine Schönberg is the one seen in op. 1 to 10—a reproducer of stale ideas. He revolts against this crude reality, and struggles to transcend it. His rebellion eventually acquires a form which corresponds neither to reflected thought nor to artistic inspiration. He is neither a full-grown philosopher nor a complete poet, but a withered philosopher who has recanted his theories and a sterile poet.

Stein has exclaimed in ecstatic admiration: 'His harmonic theory is as good a formula for composition as any theory of the past'. But there is in point of fact this trifling difference: the harmonic systems of the past were the outcome of legitimate and well-founded aspiration, while the dodecaphonic theory of Hauer and Schönberg is only an individual adventure. The so-called laws of harmony are abstractions of the world

of sounds in artistic form, which have a positive worth inasmuch as they follow and do not precede the moment of artistic elaboration. They have never been the invention of single individuals. If any one ever experimented by himself he was side-tracked from the path of creation, were his name Ramis de Pareja or Niccolo Vicentino.

The harmonic theory of the hexachord was never explicitly put forward, and many who are supposed to be musical technicians believe the six-note scale to be a unity of the sol-fa scale—as if the *ars solfandi* were not the actual putting into operation of a harmonic system! The major-minor mode of the octave was the outcome of the practical musical development of the entire sixteenth century, and it came into being long before the theoricians were aware of it. And even Debussy's harmonic system—who ever thought of it before Debussy had used it in his artistic work?

Schönberg's dodecaphonic system is nothing more than a provisional budget drawn up by an ill-informed accountant. When the time comes to realize the assets nothing is left but to admit bankruptcy. Schönberg has made a theoretical outline of the principles on which the New Music is to be built; but when he tries to apply them to real artistic creation his principles collapse like a house of cards.

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

Born at Tymoszówka (Ukraine) in 1883. He studied under Noskowski at Warsaw. He is generally regarded as the leader of a Polish musical renaissance.

Principal Compositions

Op. 1. Nine Preludes for pianoforte. 1901.
,, 3. Variations for pianoforte.
,, 4. Four studies for pianoforte.
,, 8. Sonata for pianoforte in C minor.
,, 9. Violin Sonata.
,, 10. Variations for pianoforte in A minor.
,, 18. Symphony in B major.
,, 21. Sonata for pianoforte in A major.
,, 22. *Songs of Many Colours.*
,, 24. Six songs by Hafiz.
,, 25. *Hagith.* Opera on a libretto by Felix Dörmann. Performed Warsaw, 1922.
,, 27. Symphony with tenor solo and chorus.
,, 30. *Myths* for violin and pianoforte.
,, 34. *Masques* for pianoforte.
,, 35. Violin Concerto.
,, 36. Sonata for pianoforte.
,, 37. String Quartet in C; performed 1925.
,, 38. *Demeter*, for alto solo, female chorus, and orchestra.
,, 40. *Agave.* Cantata.
,, 41. *Songs by Rabindranath Tagore.*
,, 42. *Songs of the Mad Muezzin.*

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

The music of Karol Szymanowski is almost incredibly rich in texture; his chords are luscious, and his melodies recall Oriental influences, in spite of being pervaded with a lyricism essentially Western in character. But the lyricism never rises directly to the surface; it is broken and submerged in the phantasmagoria of the composer's imagery.

Szymanowski is a genius of the Arabian Nights order. His tutor must have been a wizard, for he seems to understand harmony in its most inhuman, most magical forms. Combinations of sounds are never expressed in their natural state; they are encircled by clouds of mystery. Even when the musician has in his mind's eye the simplest of chords, the artist in him prevents him from writing it down; he breaks its light up into the colours of the spectrum as through a crystal prism. It is no natural light that shines in his music, but a mysterious ray, product of unknown alchemy. A thousand reflections seem to pierce the blackness of a sinister dark ocean, a limitless Eastern sea through which Western influence advances without hesitation, like the ship of some bold explorer. There is a touch of Cagliostro in this passionate wizard who has the hands of Liszt, the brain of Wagner, and the heart of Debussy, a perpetual seeker who delves in the mine of orchestral colour; he is at once a poet and a professor. Therein lies the peculiarity of Szymanowski's music: its romantic spirit is permeated by impressionism, and yet at the same time it is upheld by a frame of gladiatorial strength. But

the impressionism is not a pose; it is its very soul. Szymanowski's timbre, instead of being refined away into thin vapour, becomes robust polyphony on the Wagnerian model. And his polyphony does not relate merely to the scaffolding of the work, it reveals itself in whole waves of melody urged onwards by romantic sentiment. It is always intense, always at full pressure; the listener's impression is that of a river in full flood overrunning its banks.

There is a blend of d'Annunzio and Debussy in this, together with a Wagnerian symphonic expertness—albeit rather mechanized in excessive polyphony, and the mysterious witchcraft of indefinable Russian-Oriental suggestions which result in hyperbolic constructions.

In this century of objectivism and resuscitated classicism a romantic composer who goes hand in hand with Debussy is something of an oddity, especially considering that his intellectual pockets are bulging with counterpoint. It might be thought that he came from the school of Richard Strauss; but although he may be near to Strauss in the letter, they are miles apart in spirit.

Szymanowski's music abounds in harmonic threads so closely woven together that they seem inseparable. His harmony, derived from all conceivable sources, does not lose itself in the swamp of atonality; it has a stable basis in simultaneous chromaticism—and ends as a polytonality producing a definite 'colour', and not a mere volume of sound.

Harmonies disposed in different tonal planes contribute to the formation of new 'colours'. Polytonality thus used may become polyphony in solid, thick lines (as in the *Alkestis* of Wellesz); but in Szymanowski it becomes, normally, only a polyphony of colour. His simultaneous chromaticisms, while creating new timbres, remain within the sphere of harmony—and it is exquisite

harmony. In the crowded polytonality of Wellesz simultaneous chromaticism becomes crystallized and determines the relation of 'vertical' sonorities which blend badly; in Szymanowski, on the other hand, the outcome is always a good, harmonious fusion. The poetry of Szymanowski's 'timbre' is orgiastic and Dionysiac, suggesting a thick forest of sound.

The chief interest in this composer's work lies in the gradual evolution of a polyphony which contains the elements of virtuosity: and in the evolution of impressionism into something which is a blend of romanticism and impressionism. In spite of polytonal contradictions, and the tendency towards 'blots' of harmony, the lyrical force of this music when fully exerted ends by establishing unmistakably its true tonal nature. The notes, although they seem as if ground to dust by the vibrations of different harmonic generators, are still drawn to each other by the concentric force of gravity. And finally, the harmonies are drawn together and become melodies. The harmony is no longer rarefied (as happens with the impressionist composers) into a many-coloured spectrum, but is kindled into a personal pathos. Harmonic sensuality is no longer an end in itself, no longer a transitory and barren hedonism, but is fanned into an ideal flame. There is born a drama of music. The flames of a new romanticism rise to find shape in the eagerness of a new harmonic emotion; there is a re-birth of the spiritual stimulus through which alone romanticism can acquire once more æsthetic citizenship.

It is fashionable to-day to discuss the various conceptions of 'classic' and 'romantic' merely in order to put forward theories reflecting personal taste and biased prophecies. Such arguments are necessarily pregnant with errors—chief amongst them the mistake of making a theoretical, timeless abstraction out of ideas which are inseparable from their own epoch. It is

impossible, for instance, to speak of romanticism and classicism apart from the artistic works which (moving in stylistic cycles in accordance with their nature) provided the motive for these conceptions. Such a method leads to the wildest confusion. This, in effect, is what happens to Boris de Schloezer,[1] who, in order to make doubly certain of his point—the distinction between classic and romantic—ended by formulating principles which apply equally to both.

Doubtless the classical ideal has won wider advocacy since the war; but this tendency has only a personal, immediate value; it is valueless as criticism or artistic history. The tendencies which to-day are often embodied in weak works of art or theories are important only in so far as they represent psychological elements of our time which may not be mistaken for critical synthesis—i.e. artistic history. The return to classical ideas is attractive only as a legitimate reaction against the abuses of the romantic theories, the emotion which the last century vulgarized in the theatres and made academic in the schools. The romantic spirit, vitiated by the second-hand artifices of the followers of Brahms, degenerated into hypocritical and histrionic mannerism. Folk-song, the *fons et origo*, where some of the more enterprising, such as Dvořák, sought inspiration, did not put an end to false rhetoric. The revolt against the contempt for romanticism had its origin in the rhetoric of romanticism, which gave the word an arbitrary meaning different from its original one. This arbitrariness gave us the theories of objectivism which created the fashion of classicism *malgré tout*, the materialistic snobbery and (as a supreme joke) the pedantry of our youthful revolutionaries. Those who accept these theories can find in Szymanowski's music nothing but a wild incomprehensibility.

[1] B. de Schloezer, 'Sur Stravinsky,' *La Revue Musicale*, 1929.

But in spite of the plethoric congestion and redundance which is Szymanowski's worst fault, his music remains an admirable testimony against the presumptuous exclusiveness of so-called 'Objectivism'. This music bears the stamp of a human personality re-born amidst the noises of objectivism and *Gebrauchmusik*. It is song re-born—after it had degenerated with Strauss into counterfeit melody, and with Schönberg into the negation of melody. It is a re-birth of lyrical emotion that had become soulless, emphatic, and shrill. It is orchestration re-created as something vital, after being a professor's blackboard and a crank's hobby-horse.

It is in such terms that Szymanowski's romanticism must be understood; for it is not an abstract romanticism, not a windmill for the Don Quixotes of neo-classicism to tilt at; it is with the authentic romanticism of musical history that this Polish composer must be connected.

In giving practical form to his ideals Szymanowski shows no bias for any special instrument, or set form of composition. He takes his tools wherever they are to be found—violin, orchestra, choir, chamber music, symphonic music, opera. The pianoforte is, for him, the equivalent of the orchestra; an opera no more than a symphony.

In his compositions for pianoforte (such as the *Studies*, op. 33; the *Metopes*, op. 29; the *Masques*, op. 34, and the piano parts of *Mythes*, for violin, op. 30) one finds many examples of rich and varied tonalities, embodying a profound and many-sided instrumental genius. In the art of writing for the pianoforte Szymanowski reveals a lively orchestral sensibility.

But the pianoforte sonatas—especially the third—show in the best light the intensive quality of his musical genius and the robust temper of his construction.

The third sonata consists of various episodes, each bound closely to the other, an effect achieved by a

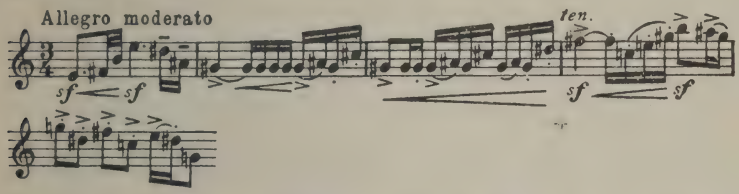
central inspiration, which gives to the parts a character of spiritual unity. This unity may be noted in the physical aspect of the themes in so far as they reveal points of resemblance; it can also be seen in such a way that the unity of the inspiration will appear from the general impression of the form itself. An initial theme, gracious amongst harmonies which give it a pearly gentleness, seeks to make headway, but gives place to a grave and dramatic episode.[1] Around it there rises and falls a rhythmic element which recurs again in the theme of the final fugue, where it acquires thematic value and a more decided gait. The same design returns later, though in different colours[2]; and again, in the full panoply of a song, in the wide lyrical expansion of the *adagio*. After the episode at page 4 (bars 1–12) the initial motif takes the upper hand again, and attempts to enforce the light atmosphere and the garrulous tones of before. But the drama becomes urgent and darkly powerful; it thrusts forward, it grows and culminates in an outburst of song.[3]

In the part which follows it, lightened by rhythmic flashes as before,[4] the way is prepared for the soft, tepid atmosphere, in which a second central episode comes to us like the smile of youth. The development of this new episode consists of groups of sound which enter into the texture through a rigid logical development. The intensity grows, becoming ever stronger and deeper. The return to the suave motif of the opening contrasts with the dramatic accents of the preceding scene—accents which will be heard again before the episode is finished.[5]

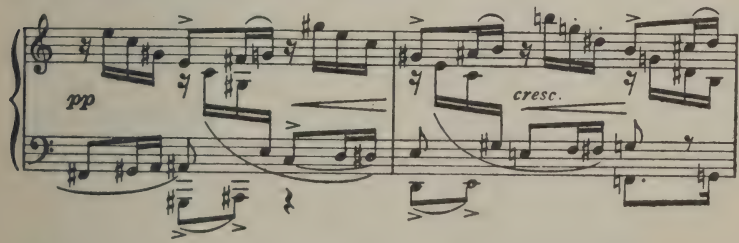
The movements which follow are a sustained and

[1] K. Szymanowski, Third Sonata for pianoforte, op. 36. Universal Edition, p. 4, bars 1 to 12.
[2] Ibid., p. 6, bars 7–9; p. 7, bars 1–3.
[3] Ibid., p. 17, bar 8 and following; also p. 18.
[4] Ibid., p. 6.
[5] Ibid., p. 7. From bars 7–8 (*animato*).

vibrant *adagio*, an *assai vivace*—a veritable masterpiece of tonal construction—and lastly the fugue (*allegro moderato*) —a superb musical conception. The subject presents itself with an air of pleasant mockery in chromatic figures:



The spirit of this music is inexhaustible; the development never halts. The hammered sounds are like the quickening pulse of an heroic energy. They are the origin of associations and affiliations which rise in ever-fluctuating waves pierced by rhythmic flashes which recall the heartbeats of a giant. The mocking tone and the merely fragmentary thought disappear. The prevailing mood is one of tragedy. The counter-subject is realized not on the first but on the second answer (p. 22, bar 11), and is tumultuous, giving to the whole piece the lofty tone of heroic poetry. This fugue reminds the listener of Beethoven's op. 106, and the composer himself must have had it constantly in mind, as is apparent from this episode:



and also in the typical trills which appear later.

But the return to Beethoven, which occurs in the

quick and agile fancy of Szymanowski, is by no means academic or passive. It is a Beethoven whom the composer has made flesh of his own flesh in the light of a living fancy which turns emotions into sound. Like the present, the past is for the composer not a museum exhibit, but an active element of life.

In the work of Szymanowski this fugue represents the highest point of musical concentration. Here better than elsewhere the different elements of style are blended together so admirably that the fusion is perfect. Technical virtuosity—at once the pride and the bane of Szymanowski—appears perfectly adequate, and responds to the inner requirements of the musical action. The same polyphonic exuberance which, in other compositions, is apt to be a burden, here fits the physical needs of the tonal organism. This idiom, in spite of its symphonic continuity, is not 'thematic' in the usual meaning of the word, i.e. a 'cell' of expression which is developed and realized in the course of the musical discourse; nor is it in accordance with any scheme which imposes a formal design on the logic of expression. It is a spiritualized tonality which proceeds freely from one musical moment to another, and achieves complete harmonious plasticity. The weak point is this: that the visions rise on top of one another, and before the first has been made clear another comes, and yet another. The outcome is like a pyramid of sound, whose sides are perpetually crumbling from top to bottom. The wealth of sound and rhythm is great—but it gives the impression of a spendthrift treatment. There has never been a case of so exquisite and captivating a poet finding a pedant's tricks come so easily to hand.

But how many valuable points of contact there are in an art consisting of so many and such varied elements! Behind the academic countenance of the professor lurks the refined coquettishness of Maurice Ravel. If certain

rhythms remind us of the elephantine gait of a Strauss, as a compensation the accompanying harmonies will flutter like the whirr of unseen wings.

The Studies for Pianoforte (op. 33) interest us otherwise than for their mechanical reality; above all for that picturesque sonority with an impressionistic background which is the especial prerogative of Szymanowski. Whatever else may be said against him, he can never be reproached with giving way to impressionism. Witness the second of these studies, a delicious *andantino soave*, with its suggestive and penetrating harmonic settings. The fifth and sixth are connected and represent the lively contrast between concentrated meditation and outbursts of powerful tone-values.[1] The eighth is grave and pathetic. The ninth is like the leaping of elves; the tenth, a tremendous hurricane. The eleventh is similar to the eighth. The twelfth, *presto*, holds everything to interest a pianist who possesses the necessary physical and spiritual requirements.

The Violin Concerto (op. 35) is a work of exceptional originality. The importance of this composition lies in its development. From first to last it is a continuous progress from the subjective standpoint to the objective. At first it does not appear to be much—a mere splash of colour; the harmonies lack transparency, the usual dissonant murmurs appear, rich in vaporous and indistinct images. The woodwind parts flicker up and down like snaky flames, and the orchestra enjoys a riot of virtuosity. But, when the solo violin enters, the scene is changed. The change is not, properly speaking, one of sonorous perspective, but of the tone, which now becomes charged with emotion.[2] The ornamentation becomes impregnated with lyrical feeling. The voice

[1] Compare with Third Sonata; p. 20, or thereabouts.

[2] *Violinkonzert*, op. 35. Adaptation for violin and pianoforte. Universal Edition, p. 14, after 'Rall'.

of the violin, infinite, agile, powerful, lively, calm, eager, and furious, digs its way into the very depths of the orchestra which surrounds and engulfs it.

In Szymanowski's compositions for pianoforte we see all the elements characteristic of his talents in perfect fusion—harmonious colours, transcendental virtuosity, and melodic richness. Under the title *Metopes* three pieces are found together—'The Island of the Sirens', 'Calypso', and 'Nausicaa'. Together they form an Hellenic reminiscence of a strangely subtle grace. The suave and delicate pages of the *Odyssey* have informed the cultured imagination of this sensualist of the twentieth century, and created the velvety and strangely voluptuous arpeggios of the 'Island of the Sirens', the dreamy melancholy of 'Calypso', and the delicious dancing motion of 'Nausicaa'. The composer's senses are stirred by a voluptuous innocence in the youthful games of the maidens in the Island of the Phæaceans.[1]

The three *Masques* are also a part of the singular pianistic repertory of Szymanowski. The *Don Juan* Serenade is specially noteworthy. It begins with much spirit and bravado, with flourishing arpeggios on a guitar. Then, from the secret corners of the heart comes a bitter echo of melancholy. Laughter and tears melt before our eyes into sorrow and buffoonery. It is difficult to find in contemporary piano music anything more ardent than this, music more closely packed and agile, more vigorous in its timbre, or more convincing in its humanity.

In the *Mazurkas* (also for pianoforte) the spirit of the dance is pervaded by a subtle musical sense. The rhythm becomes lyrical and essentially melodic. The insinuating harmonies, in the development of the song, become impregnated with fascinating, velvety attractiveness. A certain magic lurks in the air; the abandon of

[1] *Odyssey* VI, 85–109.

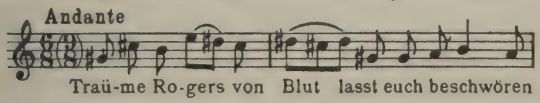
the rhythm recalls strangely the 'faery lands forlorn' of Chopin's first works.

For the exquisiteness and fascination of their harmonies the lyrics for voice and pianoforte are especially notable, two amongst them above the others — the *Lieder*, op. 41 (from *The Gardener* of Tagore), and the *Lieder*, op. 42 and 46. The harmonies, thickly encrusted with chromaticisms, give the tone, and the voice builds up a continuous emotion in the melodic line.

Szymanowski has written two operas, *Hagith* and *King Roger*. In *Hagith* can be recognized some of the qualities peculiar to this composer. It is a work not to be despised, and yet not such as to make evident the real worth of Szymanowski's art—a study, rather, an essay in which can be found technical experiences which are not entirely his own, and become eventually diffused and lost.

King Roger is an opera in which the positive and the negative qualities of Szymanowski are gathered together. It is the sum total of his musical temperament—an exceptional opera, and yet, from the standpoint of the theatre, a negative work; but symphonically splendid. A prolific melodic current runs through it all. The song of the shepherd in the first act is a melody ecstatic and sensuous at the same time, in which is manifest once more the characterization of a romantic nature; the poetic harmonization which envelops it testifies unmistakably to impressionistic sources — the most singular and suggestive feature in the romanticism of this composer.

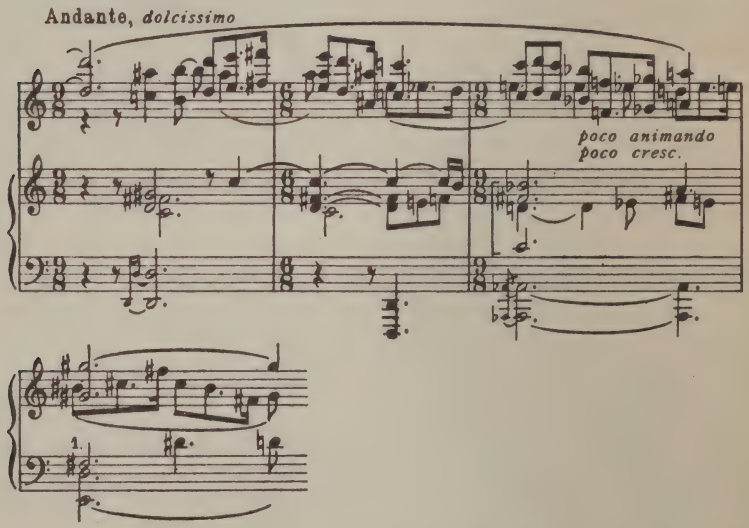
The *Berceuse of Roxanne* is deliciously suave:



it has been transcribed for violin, but must not be

confused with the *Berceuse of Aitacho Enia* for violin and pianoforte, op. 52—a piece too diluted in wayward rivulets of sound to be successful.

The argument of *King Roger* is a Dionysiac fantasy, impregnated with a religious sensuality which suits admirably the spirit of this romantic dreamer of Eastern mysteries. It has an exasperating polyphonic closeness of texture which is nevertheless pervaded by an ardent lyrical impulse.



At times it expands in spectacular grandeur, at times it breaks into overpowering dance rhythms (Act II), and at times bursts forth into orgiastic pomposities which reach the zenith of constructive possibilities.

The *Stabat Mater*, for chorus and orchestra, is a work of profound suggestive power. Its religious spirit is next door to witchcraft; the drama of the Cross becomes a prophetic vision and a legendary epic. The composer is immersed in the particular vision of the Christian

drama, to which he gives himself up (not in the mystic, sorrowful attitude of Christian piety), so as to make of it an apocalyptic spectacle. It is not the heart of the believer which is wrung by emotion, and interprets the guileless candour of the weeping Mary, but the fancy of a poet which conjures up an epic vision.

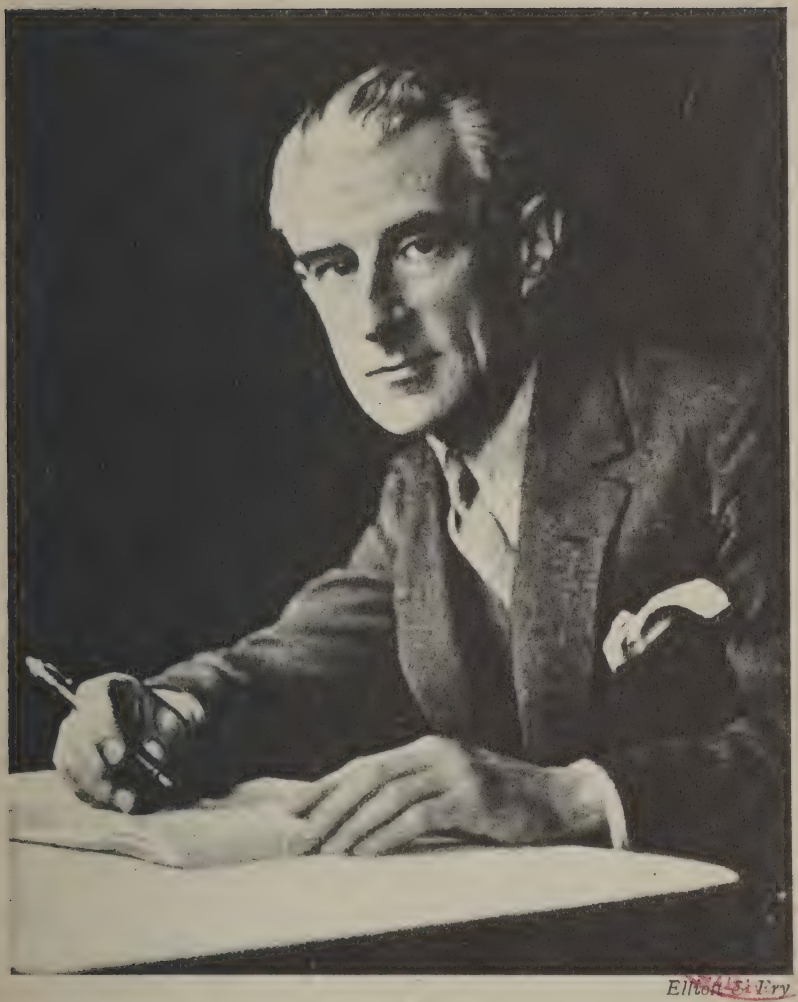
There is also a liturgical flavour embittered by a curiously sensual tinge suggesting a medieval plainsong near to barbarism on the frontier between East and West. The whole conception is extremely impressive, and leaves us astounded and fascinated at the same time. The pulsating warmth of Eastern imagery, the strong clear emotion of a Western mind—always coherent, the curious qualities of this singular composer proclaim their individuality and that of their creator.

MAURICE RAVEL

Born Ciboure (Pyrénées), 7 March 1875. Educated in Paris. Studied with Gédalge and Gabriel Fauré. In 1901 won the Prix de Rome with his cantata *Myrrha*.

Principal Compositions

Pavane pour une Infante défunte. For pianoforte. 1899.
Jeux d'Eau. For pianoforte. 1901.
String Quartet in F. 1902.
Shéhérazade. Songs with orchestra. 1903.
Miroirs. For pianoforte. 1905.
Histoires Naturelles. For voice and pianoforte. 1906.
Sur l'Herbe. For voice and pianoforte. 1907.
Rapsodie Espagnole, including the Habanera (1895). For orchestra. 1907.
L'Heure Espagnole. Musical comedy in one act. 1907.
Gaspard de la Nuit. For pianoforte. 1908.
Une Barque dans l'Océan. For orchestra. 1908.
Daphnis et Chloé. Ballet music for orchestra. 1909–11.
Valses nobles et sentimentales. For pianoforte. 1911.
Ma Mère l'Oye. Suite for orchestra. 1912.
Le Tombeau de Couperin. For pianoforte (later orchestrated). 1914–17.
Trio for pianoforte and strings in A minor. 1915.
La Valse. For orchestra. 1920.
Sonata for pianoforte and violin. 1923–6.
L'Enfant et les Sortilèges. Music to a play by Colette. 1924–5.
Chansons Madécasses. For voice and pianoforte. 1926.
Bolero. For orchestra. 1929.
Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra. 1931.



Maurice Ravel

MAURICE RAVEL

How fantastic were the colours and patterns of the new music that greeted the dawn of the twentieth century in Europe! It was a music that seemed to the listener at times like a mere drift of sound that stunned the senses, at times like the unearthly flower of a world yet undiscovered. The orchestra might have been a bed of exotic blooms in the garden of dreams. The strange landscape of sound was perceived rather than heard; the listener quivered as to the blows of some great bell sunk in the ocean of ineffable pleasure, where reality and its perception were fused into each other.

This orgy of the senses, in which words were envisaged as sounds, sound in terms of light, had been transferred from life into art: in Rimbaud, as in Debussy, the reality of beauty had become detached from its natural surroundings. As the poets had written words devoid of logical connection, yet alive with the sensual beauty of mere sound, so the musicians now planned notes which should exist graphically, almost architecturally, as parts of a structure. They wished to feel that their music existed in the black and white of the written score, in itself a symbol and a decorative entity. They translated that frenzy of lyrical sensibility into a pictorial image, and tone became for them almost a visible thing, a symphony of curves, of friezes, of arches built on the ideal ground of a future tonality. The swarming arpeggios of those scores were like the flight of birds across the sky, as they clustered, separated; and the

violin parts, divided and subdivided in superimposed planes, exemplified the cloudy interaction of the harmonic planes.

French art had by this time acquired the heritage of Baudelaire—but not without squandering much of that rich estate. The imagination of the *Parnassiens* had tended towards the sensual and the picturesque, yet with a certain harmonious energy. Debussy's muse had found its place in the contemplation of the world, and had evolved from it a concentrated and synthetic image. In the new harmonic scales can already be seen the decay of that sense of line and composition which comes from the attraction of the semitones in the octave system—that little group of lyrical symbols which holds the soul of three centuries of music. The sounds no longer attract each other, they no longer entwine logically, but are suspended as in a luminous projection. The mind plunges into the unconfined ocean of Nature, and sprinkles aloft pearly drops of sound. The listener lives in a world of dreams, abandoned to the drift of a sensuality which destroys the roots of sensibility and moral balance. It is an animal condition, without will-power, which fails to merge its emotion into an objective lyricism, but merely allows it to spread and dissolve in coloured patterns, like froth on the seashore.

In contrast to the ecstatic impressionist Debussy, Maurice Ravel appears as a more concrete and individual figure. Debussy has an imaginative vision of the new music—as of a firmament studded with tremulous points of light, devoid of clear shapes and outlines. To him artistic concepts are but points of consciousness, rarefied units of life and emotion. Ravel, although he is at home among the coloured vapours of the Debussian harmonic system, expresses himself in a more tangible form. He kneads the material into a set design—

and there lies the true secret of his difference from Debussy.

. . . . . .

Ravel's musical personality is outlined against a misty background that wavers between sentiment and buffoonery, between humour and self-abandon. Some have imagined that they saw therein traces of a Spanish temperament. The idea is false. The facts of his Pyrenean ancestry, of the recurrence of Spanish rhythms in his music from the Habanera to *L'Heure Espagnole*, do not make him less of a Frenchman at heart. Actually he is far more French than Debussy, who, notwithstanding the limitations of his lyrical horizon, is a poet unrivalled in depicting shadows and rainbow-reflections —a lyrical pantheist in whom sound becomes at once the thought and the artistic object. He is filled with living, breathing exaltation by the vision of Nature—the Nature of a symbolist—of that Baudelairean pleasure *d'évoquer le printemps avec ma volonté—de tirer un soleil de mon cœur et de faire de mes pensées brûlantes une tiède atmosphère* —the Nature of a dream, conceived behind closed doors, and evoked from the recesses of the imagination.

Ravel, on the other hand, is always in control of his talents. His emotion remains neatly defined in lyrical contours. Although at times it may seem literary or artificial, transient or unsubstantial, his musical world is impregnated with the emotional element. Here and there one is even reminded of Chabrier, Massenet, or Puccini. Yet though the emotional content of his work is involved, its form is crystal clear. In Debussy, Pelléas and Mélisande are two phantoms; the passing shadows of a dream. But Ravel's characters have true life, though they dwell in the land of fable; though they exist solely in a name—the mere images of a sigh or a smile, as in the *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*. Their life is as real as that of their creator. . . .

Certain critics have been at pains to represent Ravel's music as animated by a complicated and malicious cynicism, which, however, they have failed to define with any real clarity. 'Rien ne paraît plus objectif que l'art de Ravel et rien ne veut l'être de dessein plus arrêté.' Suarès has written as follows: 'If music can ever succeed in representing an object, without presupposing its function to be purely pictorial, then Ravel, more than any other, has achieved this'. Stravinsky, no less flies to the objective; but he fuses it into his own consciousness as an element of universal creation; he cannot perceive it detachedly: 'tandis que Ravel en reste le témoin presque ironique même quand il est ému, pour égarer l'opinion qu'on pourrait s'en faire, et de lui'. Ravel shows everywhere a desire to efface his personality, to give away no secrets of his mind. '. . . Bref, il est d'une telle réserve à l'égard de ce qu'il sent, qu'il préfère passer pour ne rien sentir, à déceler ses sentiments. Les dons de Ravel sont ceux du poète comique. . . . Comme Baudelaire, il a honte de son cœur. . . . Ravel a rompu le premier avec l'art romantique. . . . Debussy est tout dans le sentiment et l'émotion; Ravel n'y veut jamais être.'

From this it might be imagined that Ravel, so cunning and precise at fitting up and operating his artistic machinery, is in some sort an engineer of music. He has been endowed with the qualities of a Swiss clockmaker. The critics have turned him into a marionette with a human intelligence; a juggler who can produce at will lyrical beauty and sentiment, who can parody sorrow out of the exuberance of his own nature; a mountebank in a frock-coat, persuasive and elusive, able to cheat you into furtive tears, and quick to spin the tissue of professional lies—a delicious and exquisite impostor, the *cocu magnifique* of the artistic merry-go-round.

And why has this elaborate image been created by the critics? It is because they are afraid or ashamed to admit the truth: that Ravel is at heart a romantic. The fear of this critical phantasm has undoubtedly helped to confuse the ideas of those awkward interpreters whose minds are so choked by literary and technical associations that their musical ideals are distorted by the fashion of the latest clique—to such an extent that they imagine a musician such as Ravel to be a mere intellectual freak amusing himself by bamboozling the enthusiasts. The truth is utterly different. Ravel does not feign an unfelt emotion; rather he delights to contemplate the spiritual ecstasy without entering into it; to wheedle it, to caress it, to etherealize it, to frame it in sound. He dallies with the deeper sentiments as a dragon-fly darts from colour to colour.

And yet from it all there springs no mere synthetic beauty, as might be imagined, but a deep and incontestable lyric feeling; the music is a reflected image in a pool of an ideal figure of poetic imagination. The figure quivers unsubstantially on the surface of the ripples; but its outlines are glorious, and its colours unearthly. It is a passing vision which has shed its light often before upon French art—upon the work of artists from Balzac, whose *Lys dans la Vallée* is a symphony of colours and perfumes, to the lyrical, unscientific naturalism of Zola, and the exotic death-scene in *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret.*

Ravel is an artistic dandy; he throws over the most elementary musical statements a coloured veil which the physical senses cannot analyse, but which delights the mind from the richness of the literary associations which it unites to the musical. The composer is the spiritual heir to the last half-century's poetic feeling in France, and at the same time he is a connoisseur of contemporary life, of that Parisian quality of richness

and evanescence in thought which, in the words of Marinetti, 'after having collected and brought to perfection in its person all the graces, the subtleties, the achievements of artistic thought, from sheer perversity splits its colossal head by banging it against the walls of the unattainable'. The thin odour of literary associations and the distorted flavour of ordinary life are combined into those distilled harmonies, those miniature melodies. It is the music of the literary *bourgeoisie* whose roots lie in the refined debauchery of Baudelaire, which became petrified in the heart of Mallarmé, where the affections had been replaced by an ultra-refined sense of harmony. But Ravel is able precisely to build from these cold splinters a living jewel, to contemplate it with smiles and sighs, with an emotion which is not false, and which needs, if he is to maintain his integrity of spirit, to be hidden by being rarefied. In the full noonday of his music there lurks a shadow, in every melody there lies the whisper of hidden feeling, in every harmony the malice of a smile that has no touch of cheap irony, but only the faint echo of a sigh. It is the irony and the light-heartedness of a wise child, delighted by the vast spectacle of the natural world, happy in the fresh interest which everything holds for him, from the passing flight of a bird to the nearby quivering of a green leaf.

This is the true Ravel; the Ravel who has been so inappropriately labelled a satirist. The key to his outlook rests in the flux of mental states, reproducing and renewing themselves endlessly, yet retaining a certain unity of vision. Compare the sadness of 'Le Gibet' with the pert satire of *L'Heure Espagnole*, the ecstasy of the *Soupir* with the lightness of *Shéhérazade*, the morbid voluptuousness of *Surgi de la croupe et du bond* and the popular sparkle of the *Tzigane* with the malicious reticence of the Blues in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. Ravel's

essentially subjective lyricism can be recognized clearly, not only in those works of his which are best from the musical standpoint, but also when he fails to maintain a balance between technical form and the flight of his imagination. The sustained lyrical quality of works such as the *Pavane pour une Infante defunte* (*pace* the composer's own contrary opinion), the Quartet (first and second movements), the Sonatina for pianoforte, the Trio (especially the first movement and the passacaglia), the series of *Miroirs* and *Gaspard de la Nuit*, the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, the 'Mother Goose' suite, and, more recently, the episode of the Princess in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, and the *Chansons Madécasses*, is undeniable. When this is taken into consideration it may well be asked what is the meaning of Roland Manuel's phrase: 'Le point qui sépare Ravel des sectateurs du subjectivisme romantique et l'apparente aux artisans. . . .' [1]

The fact which emerges above all is that Ravel not only has a subjective and romantic outlook, but that romanticism is actually a handicap which weighs down his spirit. Take the three piano pieces inspired by Louis Bertrand, called *Gaspard de la Nuit*. 'Le Gibet' is clearly the best and the most distinctive of these. It is a picture of desolation. Against a gloomy background can be seen a gallows from which hangs a corpse. The beating of a dismal bell alone breaks the unearthly silence. But in the music nothing can be traced of the physical constituents of the picture, the realities of decay and dread. The musician breaks up (like an analyst) the exterior impressions into his own lyrical consciousness which is saturated by his own personality, and re-creates another reality which is his own expression, so that every horror is softened and assuaged—he creates a musical tonality in which the instruments speak with different voices, yet in which the whole is pervaded by a

[1] *La Revue Musicale*, April 1925, p. 19.

harmony which diffuses itself evenly through the melódic substance. This is unhappily not true of the first and last pieces of the little series—in the rectangular construction of 'Ondine', despite the charming sweetness of its opening, nor in the artificial richness of 'Scarbo'. In these two the form has swallowed up the artistic substance; or rather, the substance has failed to unite itself to the form and to diffuse itself evenly, and the physical structure has thus been achieved before the inspiration had come to birth. The musician has not concentrated upon solving the fundamental question of reconciling the integral idiom with the poetic and musical thought, but has dealt solely with external form. He has thus achieved a false balance between the means and the end—and the means, which ought to have been lost finally in the artistic end, is deprived of its proper core of inner thought. Mere 'pianistic' technique is exalted until it becomes a display of virtuosity. This is the case in *Une Barque dans l'Océan*, which contains a vigorous pianistic outline which is, nevertheless, insufficient to disentangle the confused rhetoric which enwraps the artistic vision. And the dominant factor, the element which determines this entourage of quasi-expressionism is pure romanticism—a decaying romantic mannerism, sometimes expressed as virtuosity on the keyboard, at other times in choreographic ostentatiousness, or (as in the lyric pieces *Placet futile* and *Surgi de la croupe et du bond*) concentrated into spasmodic and turgid literary allusions.

In 'Ondine' this weakness is concealed by the design—a harmonic fresco upon which are hung flowers of melody rather in the manner of Grieg; but it is patent enough in 'Scarbo', where the Lisztian Mephistopheles can be clearly seen in all his ancient trappings.

The fundamental element in Ravel's music is fed, yet not nourished by elaboration of themes, and is swollen

by exaggerated 'pianistic' technique. It radiates a harmonic colour, which destroys the true romantic emphasis, and necessitates an incoherent, noisy stylism. When, however, Ravel's pianistic qualities do not degenerate into mere professional bravura, they become a manifestation of true musicianship. Frequently it has happened that his musical ideas have had their first expression through the pianoforte medium, from the Sonatina to the 'Mother Goose' suite, originally a duet for piano; from the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* to *Le tombeau de Couperin*. The *Valses nobles et sentimentales* are a thing of delight—but that enervating and emasculate delight which is so prevalent in the art of Ravel. The sensual and the romantic intertwine in changes from light to darkness, from veils of obscure harmonies to bursts of song. The first valse, cheerful, and introductory in its nature, seems to throw open the door upon a world of voluptuous dreams, in which the old romantic *walzer*, although living again in that form which the moderns have despised, sounds nevertheless convincingly contemporary. The musician is exploring, by the light of modern culture, the *beau monde* of a forgotten and less subtle age.

A romantic spirit, too, informs many episodes of the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*. Here there is a close-knit, laconic expression, upon which its creator has shed the almost overpowering light of his fancy. Yet, nevertheless, the artist has remained entangled with another problem—the problem of music in the theatre.

Music, in the art of the ballet, can only be understood through the attitude of the Greeks, for whom sound and gesture were but different expressions of a single sentiment. To-day gesture is a detached expression which becomes sentiment—the spirit of the dance—only on condition that it is spiritually interwoven with the rhythm; and when the music accompanies without

penetrating it, the plastic drama (which has no essential difference from the spoken drama) can only be expressed as a stationary frieze. In *Daphnis et Chloé* Ravel unhappily remains in a condition of complete dramatic palsy. The reverse is the case in the 'Mother Goose' suite, which is not a musical subject drawn from dramatic action, but action born in terms of music, so much so as to make visual scenery unnecessary. In *Daphnis et Chloé* he succumbs to that difficulty which overcomes so many musicians in the theatre—of harmonizing an economy of action with an economy of musical expression. The true musician, the musician transcending the limits of the theatre, is there, true enough; but, wavering between the harmonic ultra-refinements of the real Ravel and an unexpected Wagnerian imitation, he seems at the beginning of the third part to be torn in half. Confronted by a dramatic action too indefinite to absorb into itself the music, he has merely created a musical score which is too derivative to have life for its own sake alone. The true musical expression is concentrated in the dance episodes, which realize a magical lyrical emotion in the solemn sensuality of the sacred dance, in the many-coloured splendours of the general dance, and in a hundred finished details through which shine the alluring smile of the purest Ravellian coquetry.

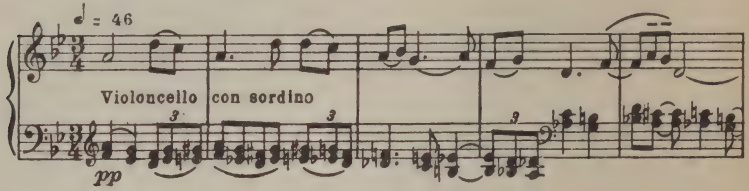
In the sonata form Ravel has written a Quartet (1902–3), a Sonatina for pianoforte (1905), a Trio for violin, 'cello, and piano (1915), and two Sonatas, one for violin and 'cello (1922), the other for violin and piano (1923–7). To this category belongs also the Introduction and Allegro for harp and small orchestra, a work which, although bearing the date of 1906, is little more than a promising juvenile composition.

The piano Sonatina is Ravel's masterpiece. Here he has attained to the ideal balance between the form which hampers him like a foregone conclusion, and his own

individual melodic expression. In the actual musical quality of the Sonatina the same Ravel as elsewhere can be seen; but the true miracle of this miniature jewel lies in the perfection of the ensemble, that harmony between the part and the whole which is at once the cross and the reward of all artistic creation. In various other works Ravel succeeds, perhaps, in painting more convincingly the pictures of a fantastic imagination; in the *Spanish Rhapsody*, with the 'Habanera', that murmurs in an atmosphere of mysterious summer scents, in the charming episode of Beauty and the Beast or the Queen of the Pagodas in the 'Mother Goose' suite—and, here and there, throughout his piano compositions (already syntheses of an orchestral score), from the *Jeux d'Eau* to *Le tombeau de Couperin*, these moments can be found. But in the Sonatina it is always the same personality, the same Ravel, with the sharp points of sensibility rounded off, and the form a homogeneous block of imagery. Here can be felt a classicism of balance and mastery reminiscent of Mozart. The delicious Minuet is a rose-coloured vision of the eighteenth century wandering through Montparnasse and Montmartre, framed in gilt mirrors of the richest baroque. Yet on the other hand the 'Mother Goose' suite is a brilliant success in the picturesque manner, in which the whole is animated by a vision of the natural world—a sort of divine spectacle which opens up, as in a game, fantastic new horizons.

The Quartet has many virtues, but it lags behind the harmonious and well-knit Sonatina. In detail full of melodious freshness and solid well-placed harmonies, it remains regarded as an entity unequal and fragmentary. It lacks the great virtue of the Sonatina—the fusion of the part in the whole. Out of the four movements, one is superfluous; and this superfluous section (and herein lies the real fault) is not isolated,

but is distributed throughout the last three. The first movement, however, is a model of musical balance, in every way worthy of the composer of the 'Mother Goose' suite, but the second reveals unevennesses and gaps, especially in the *adagio*, where the 'cello, for the most part muted, plays a song-like melody that is an obvious borrowing from Grieg.



This digression, however, does not so much harm the piece in itself, but it does harm, and render monotonous, the *très lent* which follows, and which should be the true *adagio* of the Quartet. The slow movement comes too late, when the listener's attention, and incidentally that of the author, has been distracted and surfeited. Thus the sense of superfluity arises.

Similarly, the Trio, beginning in an atmosphere which is purely musical in its conception, during the succeeding movements describes an artistic parabola. Of the four movements the only successful ones are the first and third: the first with its plastic development shows yet again the echo of Grieg; the third is a finished passacaglia. The second and the fourth are complete failures. The second the composer has called 'Pantoum': but he might have found a hundred other titles that would fit equally well. The finale is laborious, heavy, and artistically false. Already in *Gaspard de la Nuit* we have seen the pianistic pedagogue. In this heavy finale we meet the pedant of pure form, a new Ravel, who comes to us dressed in rusty academic black. The fine musician that we know looks in vain to his palette for

subtler colours; the colour-spectrum is dulled and his fancy is clouded over. There is no doubt that if Ravel had always written music of this kind he would have easily won the dubious distinction of the Prix de Rome.

Nor can the Sonata for violin and 'cello be ranked amongst his good works, as compared with the Sonata for violin and piano, which in the first movement shows Ravel finding himself again. The other two movements of the Sonata are not on the same level as the first, although the second (significantly entitled a 'Blues') recalls the wit and vivacity of the first. The last movement, 'Perpetuum mobile', is a bravura piece for the violin, which, as the title suggests, never rests from its phosphorescent sparkles; while the piano decorates them with light chromaticisms.

The three movements of this Sonata have a distinct if unequal value, but they are essentially detached pieces. The second and the third, which perhaps come closest together, are separated by an enormous gap from the first. Now, a sonata must be a harmonic whole, like any other vital organism, coherent and adequate in its parts. The Sonatina and other works of the author obey this law, as, for instance, those which are not bound by a formal title—the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* and the 'Mother Goose' suite. Ravel's Sonata is weak just in this—it lacks organic unity of style.

A point of considerable interest in Ravel is the relation between instrumental and vocal music. Ravel is an etcher in writing for the voice. His line is an arabesque of sound. He achieves perfect articulation of the word, and unites it in some cases to sounds which are intrinsically part of the harmonic structure, and then the outcome is pure song [1]; or alternatively he contrives to strike a mean between song and *recitativo*. *Recitativo* is a form

[1] Examples: *Sainte* (Mallarmé); the part of Gonsalvo in *L'Heure Espagnole*, of the Princess in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*; the first of the *Chansons Madécasses*.

that may be defined as recitation in song, and owes its effect to both music and speech. Ravel's *recitativo* lives; not because it is a declamation which is sung, or a song existing in declamation, but because it is part of a musical whole.

Although its logical existence essence is limited by the word, it achieves the importance of a counterpoint in respect to the instrumental part—a counterpoint which is a declamation. The notes are no longer an interpretation of the word; the word rather becomes a comment on the notes which have already acquired in themselves the sense of the words. A most striking example is found in the setting of Paul Verlaine's *Sur l'herbe*, which is spiritually akin to the Valses. One might go so far as to say that this is not a lyrical piece for song and pianoforte, but one for pianoforte with vocal accompaniment. And the same applies—though less cogently—to *Placet futile.*

We can now understand those *Histoires Naturelles* (1906; published 1907) which made such a stir at the time. The controversies and discussions aroused were natural, for Ravel had set real prose to music, and made the inhabitants of a zoological garden the objects of lyrical effusion. But even these unusual characters made evident his bizarre talent. For the picture he gives us is perfect. Everything in it becomes music—though Ravel does not intend to draw these animals as they are, but to fashion them in keeping with his means and resources. The outward impression of the image melts in the movement of harmonies; everything reflects the ardour of its creator and lean prose becomes lyricism. The peacock is showing his finest feathers. He is magniloquent, but discreet at the same time; the sound is full, yet soft, suggesting something seen in the distance; an outline not well defined, but seen through the eye of the artist which reduces the natural object, and imposes

upon it its own colour scheme. Or the cricket: 'c'est l'heure où, las d'errer, l'insecte nègre revient de promenade et répare avec soin le désordre de son domaine . . .' —what has music to do with such a dry and ordered narrative? Music has its function here as wherever fancy creates an atmosphere and reality evokes emotion. The atmosphere of the *Histoires Naturelles* is in the beauty of colours clustered in subtle but vibrant groups. *Le Cygne* is a delicious piece of pictorial music: 'car il n'a faim que des images floconneux qu'il voit naître bouger et se pendre dans l'eau'; it is light shimmering over a clear mirror of melody. The composer is so imbued by its poetry that at the end a piece of irony finds him wanting. The swan 'chaque fois qu'il plonge, il fouille du bec la vase nourrissante et ramène un ver'. But the composer does not believe it, and is left with his own notion of what a swan should be. The many-coloured mists disappear and the voice becomes hoarse. In *Martin Pêcheur* there are admirable passages of fugitive charm, and the *Pintade* reveals an extraordinarily subtle, almost malicious temper.

A work of pure vocal writing, simple and unmistakable in its outlines, is the voluptuous *Chansons Madécasses* (1926), for voice, flute, 'cello, and pianoforte. There are three pieces. The melody, like that of the Princess in *L'Enfant*, is laid out on a rich contrapuntal base. 'Tes baisers pénètrent jusqu'à l'âme'—it is the intoxication of wine. The exoticism which pervades Ravel's essentially literary imagination finds, in these *chansons*, a clear-cut mode of self-expression.

Maurice Ravel's two best-known works for the theatre are *L'Heure Espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. Nohain's *L'Heure Espagnole* is what, in modern slang, would be called a *pochade*. The key to the action, which takes place in the shop of an old watchmaker, is to be found in the disparity of age which makes inevitable a

clash of physical needs between him and his wife. Torn between the rival advances of a poet and a banker, the woman ends up by giving herself to a strong-armed muleteer. The tale is coarse and scarcely witty, and it lingers over various scabrous details. The essential thing is that the action boils down to a kind of pattern formed by the pendulum-swing of the watchmaker's great clocks. This happens in fact to such an extent that it becomes symbolic of the clock-case in which the woman has carried into her bedroom first the one, then the other of her sham lovers—and the farce ends in monotony. We see only a woman surrounded by four idiots—one of whom actually carries off the prize. But the music depicts neither the imbecility nor the sensuality of the characters. It is merely a commentary, a running accompaniment to this *pochade* in very poor taste. However, it is indisputable that the beauty of some of the detail is permanent and lasting; the rapid dialogue full of *doubles ententes*, adapted to the music with a mastery of language always fluent and plastic, is one of the best examples of *recitativo*. But this does not satisfy the listener. Ravel is a musician, and here the music is reduced to disjointed splinters, a dust full of stones which hold a rare and momentary gleam of beauty, but which are not strung together. The lyricism concealed in those fragments has to remain largely unspoken. The Spanish rhythms that decorate the score are not peculiar to it, nor are they equal to the 'Malagueña', the 'Férie', the murmuring, sensuous 'Habanera' of the *Rapsodie Espagnole*. There is wit expressing itself in elegant caricature, a charming lightness, as of a *boîte à musique*—and a finale which, for true feeling, is worth the rest of the opera put together. It has not fallen to Ravel to resuscitate the idea of an opera modelled on Boccaccio, nor the mirage of a new version of the *opéra bouffe*. Ravel is not, as some have said, a conjurer; he

is a poet who is sincere in his outlook upon life; and the conjurer, above all things, must avoid sincerity.

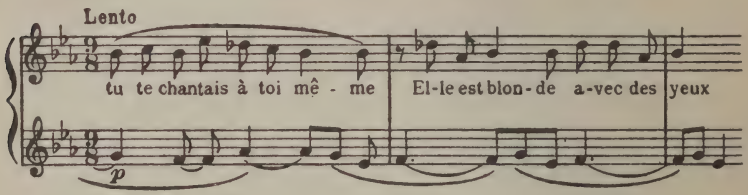
That irony, in which he has almost achieved a monopoly, is neither bitter nor satirical—merely malicious and laughter-loving. The sex-ridden woman, who weeps tears of sheer lust for a brawny navvy's arms, is no character for Ravel's music—that subtle mosaic of sound—to interpret. The central idea is withered before a vivid imagination which sees in it only the fragmentary episodes—which seizes hold of some accessory idea and ignores the rest.

The reverse is the case when the composer is dealing with *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Colette. Here the action is poetry in motion, developed and realized to the full in the music. The hero is a child—the inevitable child of the fairy-tales—a rascal, a vandal, passionate and hasty. But, as if by enchantment, Truth comes to life around him, and while it demonstrates by the light of lyrical beauty what is the life he desires, it is a living reproach to him. Truth is a dream, but what else can it be to a poet? The sorcerers of this opera, in which the inner key to Ravel's art is given once again, are really the symbol of external things; the poltroons who refuse shelter to the devastating child, dancing their confused minuet of conflicting harmonies; the clock which, with its querulous tragi-comic sorrow mourns the lost life, and makes the most of its sorrow, in the manner of a lover in Puccini [1]; and the fire, personified by a tiny soprano, who throws off a little rondo full of bravura and life (*Je réchauffe les bons, mais je brûle les méchants*) behind which lies the cinder with which the flame struggles vainly. The scene is the twilight time; a hint of moonlight steals into the room. A child is

[1] Ed. Durand, *Per Canto e Piano*, p. 17:

'Si j'avais pu continuer de sonner
Toutes pareilles les unes aux autres,
Les heures . . .'

frightened, but from the pages of the book, which he had thrown away, come distant voices of shepherds and shepherdesses; a cheerful retinue of tambourines and flageolets. The pastoral scene takes shape, charming and gentle, graceful and modest. Then the delightful procession vanishes. But now one of the pages of the book flutters open and there is revealed—first a languid white hand, a head of purest gold, then the princess herself; the adorable princess of the legends, misty as the vision of a dream. The child recognizes the figure: it is she!—the princess conjured up by dreams from the white cradle—and the melody which accompanies her comes from the deepest wells of the heart, the clearest, the sanest, and the most purely vocal of all Ravel's melodies, human and living in its appeal, whose rise and fall is that of the human passions and the human breath. The voice of the princess is contrapuntally interwoven with the delicate instrumental texture, and her musical image becomes a human soul; *tu te chantais à toi-même . . . et j'étais depuis hier ta première bien-aimée! . .*



This lyric work of 1924, the first movement of the Sonata for violin (1923), the first of the *Chansons Madécasses* (1926)—consider for a moment how they compare with the tortuous literary implications of *Surgi de la croupe et du bond* (1913), and realize how the mind of the poet, saddened and clouded, can liberate itself in the purest song. How the weariness and sadness of the princess wells up into a wide and overpowering emotion! ('Qui sait si le malin enchanteur ne va pas

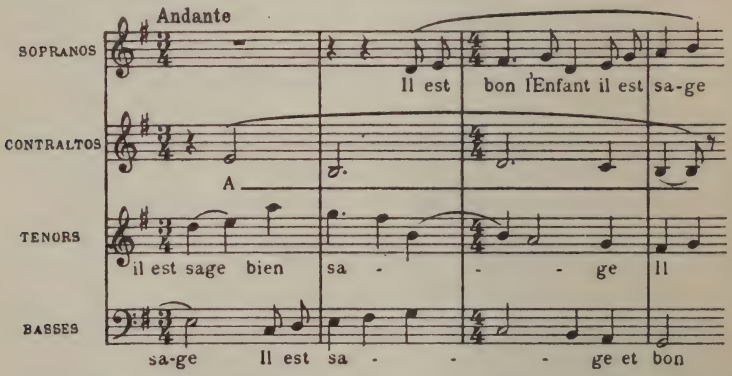
me rendre au sommeil de la mort?'); and how subtly the first naïve intuitions of the child are quickened to a hint of the awakening of love!

But the princess is lost for ever in the abyss of her own unreality. And what comes to take her place? Her antithesis—mathematics. A queer old man shaped like the Greek letter π; a comic tenor, calling himself Antoine Trial, the symbolic representative of the exact sciences, who whispers fantasies and paradoxes into the ear of the child, surrounded by a nightmare crowd of numerals. This dance of mathematical imps and elves is a masterpiece of wit and originality,[1] and a fair share of the praise must be given to the collaborator, Colette. The work ends in a round dance, a miraculous blending of musical and mathematical impertinences. Finally, two notable personages appear—strangers! They are two cats, a male and female, miaouing and hissing. It is impossible to say how far the composer carries off this audacity, this grotesque duet of *Môrnaunaôn* and *Minchon*, this tempest of squeaks and hisses; it is only certain that the risky vocal experiment is backed by a musical pattern of clear logical shape. It is no mere onomatopœia, but a fine and pointed musical wit.

The next scene is the garden, filled with equivocal breezes, where the music of the frogs blends with that of the owl; where birds whistle and dragon-flies buzz to slow waltz-rhythms to the counterpoint of the nightingale. It is the dragon-fly which the callous child had already transfixed with a pin; he knows the dancing animals—but in a moment of fright he gives a cry of 'Mother!' And then the beasts fall upon him, teasing him, biting, and stinging, and scratching. But in the scuffle a small squirrel is hurt, and falls near to the child. It is the moral of the tale, the end of the tale; for the small infant is filled with pity for the beasts; he tries to

[1] Ed. cit., pp. 52 and 59.

help the little wounded animal, and the action redeems him; he becomes worthy of the help of the mother on whom he cried.

In the garden scene it seems that the creative power of the music is on the wane. This kind of botanical and zoological pantheism is reproductive rather than creative, in so much as the imitative sounds are not always susceptible of translation into music. One might say that the first cry of the bat was a warning signal, that the last part of this fine work was degenerating with the increasing loquacity of the animals. Nevertheless the action concludes with a happy thought, and the musician winds up his fable with a charming madrigal, in an atmosphere of redemption, sung by all this little brute creation:

In thirty years of musical activity Maurice Ravel has never been false to his nature. Neither the follies of expressionism, nor the noisy objectivity of the post-war phase, nor the vagaries of industrious and industrial charlatanism could persuade him to adopt fashionable poses. And, above all, he has never yielded to that opportunism to which so many musicians, many of them talented, have bent the knee; men who in their first youth were ardent rebels; who weakened and gave way to the desire for easy and worldly success.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Born Down Ampney, near Cirencester, 12 October 1872. Educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge. Studied under Charles Wood at Cambridge, and with Parry and Stanford at the Royal College of Music. He was organist of South Lambeth church for three years. He served during the war in the R.A.M.C., and in the Royal Artillery. In 1920 was appointed professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London, also becoming from 1920 to 1928 conductor of the London Bach Choir.

Principal Compositions

Three Norfolk Rhapsodies for orchestra. 1906.

Towards the Unknown Region. For chorus and orchestra. Text by Walt Whitman. 1907.

Fantasia for Strings on a theme by Thomas Tallis. 1909.

Incidental music to the *Wasps* of Aristophanes. 1909.

A Sea Symphony. For chorus and orchestra. 1910.

On Wenlock Edge. Song-cycle with string quartet and pianoforte accompaniment. 1909.

Three organ preludes.

In the Fen Country. Symphonic impression for orchestra.

Five mystical songs. For baritone, chorus, and orchestra. 1911.

Hugh the Drover. Opera. 1911–14.

A London Symphony. For orchestra. 1914.

String Quartet in G minor.

The Lark Ascending. For violin and orchestra. 1914.

Mass in G minor. 1920.

The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains. Opera in one act after Bunyan. 1922.

Pastoral Symphony. 1922.

Old King Cole. Ballet. 1923.

Flos Campi. Suite for viola solo, small orchestra, and voices. 1925.

Sancta Civitas. Oratorio. 1926.

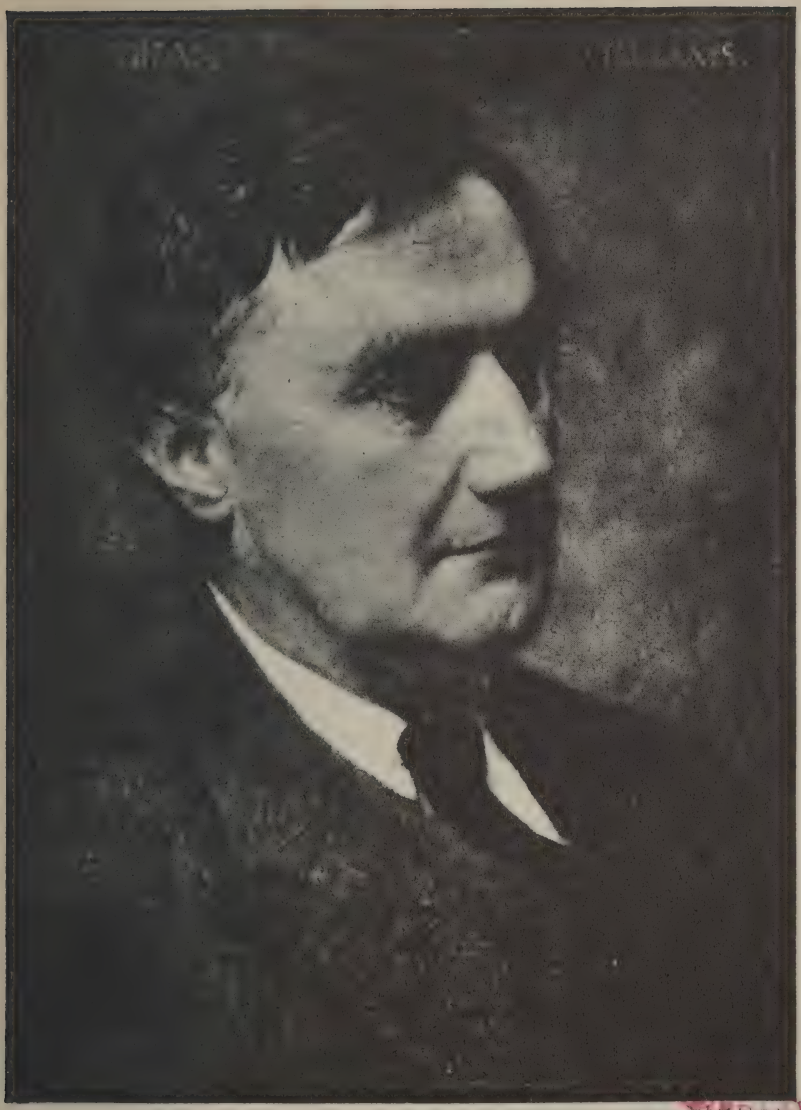
Sir John in Love. Opera. Produced 1929.

Job. Masque for ballet. 1930.

Benedicite. For chorus, soprano solo, and orchestra.

Magnificat. For contralto solo, women's choir, and orchestra.

Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra.



Herbert Lambert

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

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THE *Musical Times* of April 1931, on p. 326, published a protest, backed by the signatures of many well-known people, against a criticism of Elgar written by Professor Dent in Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*. Among the signatories (for the most part themselves musicians) might be seen the name of George Bernard Shaw, who did not merely join in the general protest, but added a statement of his own, to the effect that: 'Elgar holds the same position in English music as Beethoven in German music'.

The oddest thing about this drawing of swords in defence of Elgar is the delay in doing it. Professor Dent's criticism was written as far back as 1924, and appeared in the first edition of Adler's *Handbuch*, and also in a special number of the Milanese review, *L'Esame*, devoted to contemporary music. Why, then, was this passionate protest made only on the appearance of the second edition of the *Handbuch* in 1931?

It is interesting to trace, in so far as it reflects English opinion, in what Professor Dent's offence consisted. His exact words were: 'To English ears Elgar's music is too emotional, and not wholly exempt from vulgarity'. In other words: 'Elgar repels many English musicians owing to his rhetorical gallantry which imperfectly conceals the essential vulgarity'. The professor has spoken ill of a national hero. It is true that to-day every one waves the anti-romantic flag; but this is only in theory, and a mistaken theory at that. In practice it is rare that the knee is not bent to the luminaries of

the romantic past. The world is the same all over; in Italy, for example, there is but one voice among musicians, lamenting the decay of opera: and yet all are united in paying homage to the worn-out academic champions of theatrical verisimilitude in music. No one can reflect for long on this wild inconsistency of popular thought without being refreshed by a laughter that blows away all sense of imitation.

Dent's criticism of Elgar is not quite the blasphemy that many have imagined it to be, nor one likely to discredit the musical renown of his own country. At heart Dent shows himself more English than these vehement defenders of Elgar, since his opinion was given as that of a musician (let us leave the question of nationality out for a moment) protesting against a rhetorical idiom; and it was in rhetoric, which is to say in a musical idiom that is empty and presumptuous, that the English music of the last century dug its own grave. It is useless to attack the doctor who has done no more than diagnose the complaint.

English music has been intellectually bankrupt since the days when Händel settled down in the country; from that time onward the ruler of the waves became, musically speaking, a German colony. It is not, therefore, surprising that the currents of English musical thought stagnated in the sticky backwaters where the academic and sentimental imitators of Liszt and Mendelssohn held sway. After Byrd, Thomas Tallis, Weelkes, John Wilbye, and Henry Purcell, England became barren of native musicians. Why? Dent has attempted to find the answer.

To English susceptibilities the French exaltation of the *patrie* seems faintly ridiculous; the Englishman does not exalt England; he is content to love it, and to love it secretly. For whole generations the Englishman knew that these secret affections of his were expressed by the countryside, by sport, and perhaps even by

English cooking; but not by English music, for music was a thing which always came from abroad.

But this statement hides a fact of grave import. When a nation lacks an artist who is truly national it lacks a true artist.

The national character of a work of art implies first of all the artist's own individual character. The artist's character depends upon his nature, and that again upon the right to claim a heritage. There are bastards in art as well as in law. This argument is not one in favour of artistic nationalism, but it needs to be expounded once and for all before the question of nationality in art can be tackled.

The conception of nationality in art, as in other things, is capable of a right and a wrong interpretation, according to how it is taken. An example of the wrong interpretation is the pride which puts the idea of a national work of art before the capacity to produce any work of art at all—the lust for creation, nursed on a warm patriotic glow, which confines itself to planning instead of acting, which produces endless theories and programmes for new art-forms—but no works of art. There are many who make new laws daily in framing a national artistic code, but these amateur Justinians never manage to enunciate a word of common sense.

Yet there is one correct way of interpreting nationality in art which must not be confused with the empty brayings of the other, although many serious writers on music do actually confuse the two. The correct way lies in understanding the work of art in relation to its legitimate heritage and its nationality in so far as this means its social significance—as, for instance, in the case of forms of language studied by a philologist. In the same way that we are not men so led by virtue of our physical attributes, but inasmuch as we belong to a definite family, a community, a spiritual unit, so

the artist cannot be considered in the splendid isolation of intellectual anarchy, but only as part of a carefully-constructed edifice. For no flash of genius ever exists without a background, an historic relationship. Art is a language, the expression by the individual of a universal conception. It is a Freewill of its own, and yet linked to a moral sense in that it does not merely wallow in an abstract and anarchic liberty. History is the womb of art—history considered as the Will of God; and the individual, to have a true existence, must obey the rhythm that shapes historic unity. The individual belongs to his own generation, the generation to a whole cycle of ages which move in the ideal rhythm that gives to each group its own consciousness to national consciousness. By national must be understood not the myth of nationalism fostered by Jingoes and Chauvinists the world over, but one aspect, a moment in the immense epic of humanity.

When a nation is said to be artistically decadent, what is meant is that the men of that race hear no inner voices urging them towards creative work. An artist devoid of national characteristics in some shape or form is as inconceivable as an individual with no individuality.

Musical England in the nineteenth century was, as has been said, to all intents and purposes a German colony. It is in this connection that Professor Dent opposes 'English ears' to Elgar's music. Since the Great War there has been witnessed a reawakening of national sentiment in English music; and this, in the light of what has just been argued, in a country where music had been dead for two centuries, means a reawakening of national consciousness in art.

What Russia achieved in the nineteenth century was what all the nations hoped to do in the twentieth. They hoped—their intentions were no doubt excellent, but they remained mere intentions—and the road to

Hell is paved with such. The national spirit, strayed from its normal place in historic development, became nationalism; in music, a nationalism that expressed itself in a revival of folk-lore—again a case of artistic theory running away from the hard facts.

Now it is possible for the artistic programme to be absorbed by its realization; in which case it need no longer be considered apart from the manifestations it produces. But often the purely academic theory remains detached from the facts, and then it must be considered on, so to speak, a parallel basis with the realization.

The importance of the popular melodic repertory in Russian music is well known. English musicians have felt an equivalent attraction towards the traditional songs of their own country. Largely through his exposition of this attraction Charles Villiers Stanford (died 1924) is remembered as the most important English (or British) musician of the modern insular renaissance, with the possible exception of C. H. H. Parry.

But the approach to folk-song presented for English musicians a disadvantage from which the Russians had been free. To begin with, Russian art and the national folk-song were linked by their natural spontaneity, while in Western countries, it would seem, this spontaneity is, so to speak, prepared by reflections of culture and criticism. And—a point of no less importance—there is a radical difference between Russian and English folk-lore.

The popular Russian melodies are the flower of a superb and savage beauty; they are so primitive and so un-Western with their inborn lack of rhythmic symmetry and tonal smoothness that they formed a powerful antidote to the sensational romanticism in which Western music was beginning to drown. The popular melodic tradition, in the Russian musicians of the newer

school, from Moussorgsky to Stravinsky, became one with their own personal vision and taste. The collective personality of an eye is reflected in each individual, as the voice of the individual is in some measure that of his own race. Thus there arrives, as if by a miracle, a balance between the expressive nature of the popular Russian language, so strange to the old musical world of Europe, and the cries of rebellion which echoed across the artistic universe at the end of the nineteenth century. It was a powerful new influence which was destined to weigh heavily upon the destiny of the new music.

English folk-song is entirely opposed to these conditions, being the very negation of all that is primitive and untamed. It is a polished jewel, the product of a distinct tradition. Melodies so dignified in character, so smooth and refined in tone, would rather seem the result of a complete musical education than a spontaneous growth. The popular vein, even in its most naïve moments, appears to be conscious of a noble inheritance, ruling over popular sentiment as a birthright.

The English musical world of to-day is passionately attached to traditional national music, and it finds itself at ease there, but it cannot on that account reckon any the less with the new musical forces which, from impressionism onwards, have revolutionized current technique. And these new revolutionary modes, among which, say, a Stravinsky might find his natural habitat, were bound to conflict violently with the dignified English musical equilibrium.

Amongst contemporary English composers the one who has the clearest sense of balance and direction seems to the writer to be Ralph Vaughan Williams. His sobriety, the irreproachable good taste (so typically English) of his work, tranquil amid the wildest emotional

stimuli, standing four-square against the windy blasts of human passion, his aloofness from the infatuation of virtuosity—these are the constant and unchanging characteristics of his work. A sense of mastery, a force which can subdue events to the underlying will of expression which is not found elsewhere, pervades his work. This sureness and knowledge of oneself, which comes from a thoroughly musical outlook and nature, obliterates any fear of the composer's falling between the two stools of pseudo-romanticism and academic dryness, between the iconoclasts and the iconographers. Vaughan Williams skims lightly over the impressionistic furnace without even scorching his wings. And indeed English musicians perpetually run the risk of falling from the German frying-pan into the French fire. Effeminate harmonies and saccharine melodies, or cacophonic orchestration and syncopated rhythms: there lies the choice between contemporary continental schools. To fall between Moeran and Goossens would be to lose for ever the hope of a truly national English music.

Another danger afflicts English musicians, even such brave spirits as Bliss and Bax—that of becoming craftsmen pure and simple; brilliant technicians and spiritual dilettanti, as has happened to many Italian composers of the present century. The reasons for forming an individual style (which are at bottom the reasons for all artistic creation) seem to lead modern composers into thinking of style as a purely abstract phenomenon. There is nothing worse for an artist than to formulate a style when he has nothing to express. Style is identical with the creation of a work, it even *is* the work, but it has no existence apart from it. There is one moment when a work is born in the mind, when all time is imprisoned in the recesses of the dark creative impulse: before this moment comes style is a mere empty term, an academic abstraction. And such abstractions must not

hamper the artist's range and freedom. The problem of modern music is the eternal problem of the work of art; it does not consist in finding a style—which is only a panacea for the creative impulse—but in the setting free of a new world of visions imprisoned in the artist's brain. We must master a technique which sets fancy free. And herein is the true tragedy of the so-called modern classicism, that crisis of culture and sentiment which is the tragedy of, among others, Stravinsky—the champion of every shade of grandeur and decadence in contemporary music.

But, faced with similar difficulties, Vaughan Williams rests untroubled and serene. Not that he stands aloof from the strife—for, after all, he is a musician of his own epoch, with all the virtues and vices of his time, from the unbounded hankering after up-to-dateness to the purely literary love of the primitive. But they do blend miraculously in his unique personality. The formal sophisms of the neo-classical formulæ make a breach in his armour, and it is patent how he enjoys occasionally being dry and reticent. But he is not a cynical admirer of pure form. His music is not so much straightforwardly melodic as flavoured throughout with melody. He is a musician of subtle sensibilities, yet reserved and modest in his most intimate moments. Between the essential simplicity of his line and the inner lyrical emotion there is no disunion. The sentiment harmonizes with the simplicity of the medium.

At times, however, the sentiment becomes too strong, and the composer seems to abandon himself to a kind of ecstasy of imagery. The images that float before him then are those of northern landscapes seen by the magic light of a dream, of mists and bells faintly ringing, of trees shaking in the wind, and the halting accents of love: 'Take my hand quick and tell me what you have in your heart. . . .' Among such works are the *Songs*

of Travel (1905), of which it is enough to remember above the others, *The Roadside Fire*, and the cycle of five songs for tenor voice, piano, and string quartet, *On Wenlock Edge*, which seems to be the high-water mark of this twilight romanticism. Elsewhere, as in the opera *Hugh the Drover*, the lyrical impulse leads him toward melodrama.

But between the sentiment which expands its lyrical wings, and his own tendency to sink into a 'stylized simplicity', a tendency that has pervaded all music since the war, Vaughan Williams does find his true level. The opera *Sir John in Love*, his version of the Falstaff theme, is a glorious proof of this.

On the other hand, in the academic Concerto for violin, this equilibrium is broken; largely by the harshness of the contrast between the eighteenth-century formalism of the first movement (a puerile composition), the succinct yet popular melody of the *presto*, founded on a theme already laboured by the composer in *Hugh the Drover*, and the fickle lyrical mood of the *adagio* (the best movement). One might call the work reticent, almost shamefaced, full of a protective colouring that prevents it from standing out against its background. In short, a crude work, full of the fads of neo-classicism, that movement which is as absurd as its name.

There are moments when Vaughan Williams is on the verge of attaining pure beauty and freeing himself from his persistent hankering after stylization, when suddenly a spark flies out, and the little flame becomes a furnace. This is easily notable in his early compositions (mainly obsolete musical coinage like the forgotten Aristophanean suite *The Wasps*), in which some popular and entertaining characteristics, although childish in expression, give a promise of life to come. They occur again in the ballet *Old King Cole* (1925), a work more refined in quality, despite the reminiscences

of *Petrouchka* and the odour of a more gentlemanly Stravinsky that hang over it.

Romantic motives prompted Vaughan Williams in composing the *Sea Symphony* (1903–10). Even this work is 'dated', although it is one which does not deserve neglect—if not on artistic grounds, at any rate as representing a phase of the composer's sentimental development. The work reflects, in the plane of its poetical growth, the structural organization of the classical symphony. But to divide it neatly between words and music leaves it a half-way house between an artistic form and a rhetorical scheme. The music needs its own self-justification, but it cannot absorb the literary and poetic themes into a form exclusive to itself. The literary implications which the composer, fixing his eyes religiously on the musical question, has turned out of the door, fly in again at the window. The word-images stamp upon the choral parts their own sense of prophetic oratory. The music, as a result, seeks vainly for an apotheosis, a transfiguration which shall absorb all these elements in itself. It is the fervour of a hymn which might at any moment become a Bacchanal pæan; it struggles with the energy of its melodic line. There is a passionate driving force—but no passion. A little of everything can be found in it—the Mendelssohn of *St. Paul*, the Schumann of *Faust*, the Franck of *Redemption*, and the unfailing Wagner of the *Ride of the Valkyries*. A similar plurality can be found among the prolific works of Vaughan Williams: the ugly pseudo-romantic, the decadent nineteenth-century romantic, who is the 'Jekyll', and the ugly neo-classicist who is the 'Hyde' of the academic Violin Concerto. But it is worth noticing that even in these circumstances the English composer is never actually repellent, as others similarly situated might be.

Vaughan Williams makes amends for the unbounded

choral richness of his *Sea Symphony* in other directions, and errs again. It will suffice to glance at the obviously forced primitivism of certain songs, such as *Merciless Beauty* (1922), and the oratorio, *Sancta Civitas* (1925), so full of a dark outlook that bespeaks the presence of faith, but does nothing to illuminate it. It is like an overheated imagination, in the platonic enchantment of immortality [1] which sinks into beatitude through the sheer beauty of the fables of life and death. But this is the dim borderline where instructive simplicity melts into literary cunning. The truth is that even Vaughan Williams has been caught between the contrasting forces of sentiment (inherited) and of culture (acquired), like every other active musical intelligence of to-day. His outstanding feature is that he succeeds in comprehending and writing these opposite views of life—the indiscriminate and cheerful fable of the popular ballet, *Old King Cole*, and the delicate and mystical simplicity of the suite *Flos Campi* (1928). With this work, together with the *Mass* for soloists and double chorus, the *Sancta Civitas*, part of the choral *Benedicite*, the opera *Sir John in Love*, and the *Norfolk Rhapsodies*, Vaughan Williams has reached a notable plane of independence in form and design.

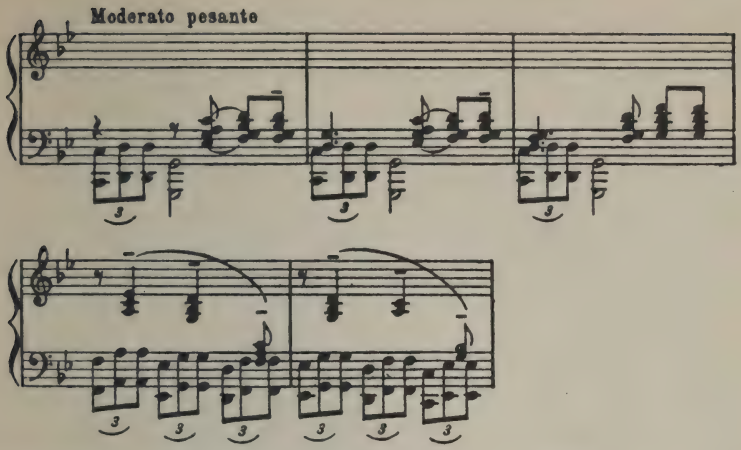
The composer has called *Flos Campi* a suite, but the significance of this is only broadly approximate. The series of six pieces which compose the work develops in a Biblical atmosphere from a single state of mind. At one point there is a solo voice contrasting with an orchestra composed of voices and instruments. It is the first time in Vaughan Williams that the voice finds employment as an instrument among other instruments. It appears also in the last movement of the *Pastoral Symphony* (1922), the first really symphonic essay of the

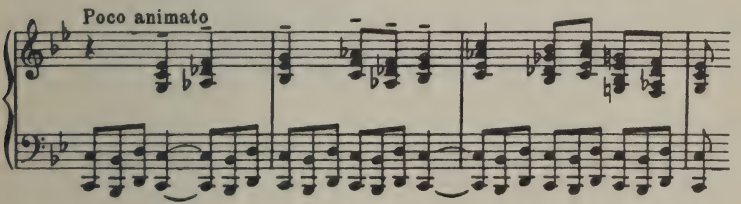
[1] The composer has prefaced his work with a quotation from the *Phaedo*. (The myth of dead souls—ethical conclusion.)

composer—far better than the *London Symphony* which, for the very reasons which gave it birth, sometimes fails to acclimatize itself to the descriptive intention.

In the *Pastoral Symphony* all that is most substantial and lasting in Vaughan Williams finds expression. The name 'Pastoral' should not deceive the listener into expecting it to be a purely descriptive work. It is descriptive only in the sense that all art is a description of secret countryside in the mind's eye. As an objective reality it is no more a concretely descriptive work than the echo of a distant voice, a reflection of the long-desired warmth of spring. The hint of spring's coming seems to become a song of triumph in the trumpet theme in the second part of the third movement; but this is not necessarily realism, or the literal description in musical terms of actual landscapes. Every one sees and hears what pleases him in music; but here at least there are no imitations of chattering brooks or rustling leaves. There is a vague and vast horizon which brings peace into the refreshed human soul.

The indication of the speed and character of the movements is noticeably uniform: *molto moderato* in the first: *lento moderato*, *moderato pesante*, *lento—moderato maestoso* in the others. But this does not bespeak a monotony of character in the movements. The variety lies deep in the inner movement of the music, in subtle changes of mood rather than in the external programme of the work. It is worth while noticing the neat rhythmic change in the third movement[1] which, despite the metronome marking, is the most lively by virtue of its especial rhythm. Movement in music means not physical motion, but spiritual excitement, as in the agitated triplets with which the movement opens:

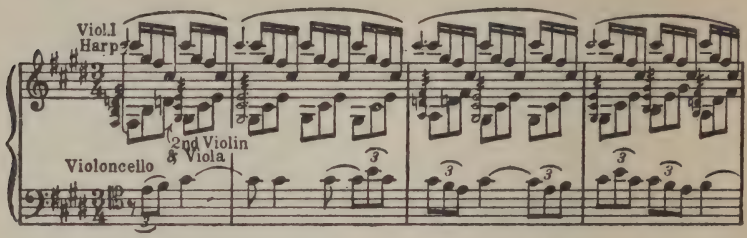
[1] *Pastoral Symphony*, Vaughan Williams. Orchestral score, Curwen, London, 1924, p. 50. Second theme, p. 51. Third theme, p. 54. Combination of the three themes on p. 56.

and which is quickly subdued by the strings in unison, above which the wind instruments build a contrapuntal structure of sevenths. The triplets continue to vibrate in the basses, up to the creation of a new image from which there breaks out a kind of hymn of exaltation:



The second version of the initial theme dissolves into a *presto* movement, which is a delicious morsel of light trembling rhythms, studded with melodic gems.[1]

In the last movement the human voice enters, singing notes, but no words. It is a vocal liturgy which in its development gives the clue to the whole lyrical meaning of the symphony—nature purified of the senses, absorbed in a greater faith and contemplation of itself—the

[1] *Pastoral Symphony*. Ed. cit., p. 75 et seq., last fifty-five bars.

tenderness of affection and the poetry of unvoiced prayers:[1]

The sense in which the word 'pastoral' is used in this symphony by Vaughan Williams is now evident. It is not the pastoral Arcadia of the cowshed, nor the pastoral chromo-lithograph beloved of some composers. The arcadian mimicry of Vivaldi and Beethoven was played out by the end of their epoch. Vaughan Williams's pastorale is essentially a contemplative one. It is a contemplation that is serene and yet tinged with melancholy, in which Nature penetrates like a faint echo, and expresses its presence in a liturgical shape. Harmonically this atmosphere demands from the composer the union of major and minor.

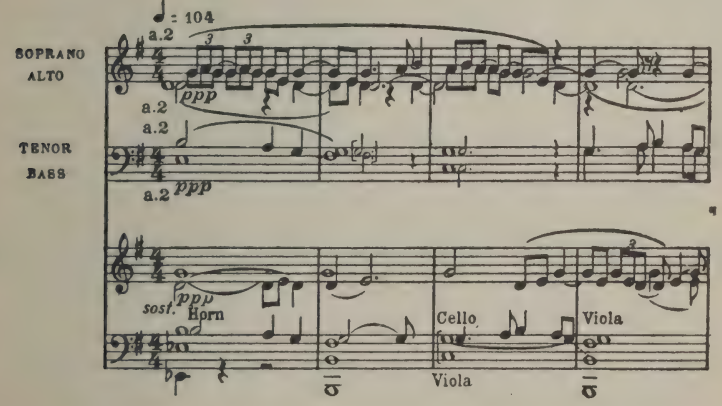
In this sense the little poem *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* is pastoral, like the orchestral work *The Lark Ascending*, although this is of secondary importance, and *Flos Campi*. In the little poem there is a pastoral liturgy which resolves itself into a tangle of angular melodies, which melt suddenly like snow under a hot sun, into the liquid gold of the purest romanticism.[2] The song cuts the cloudy vapour of the contemplative mood like a flame. The work has an intimate connection with *Flos Campi*, even in certain thematic fragments.[3]

[1] *Pastoral Symphony*. Ed. cit., p. 93.

[2] *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. Orchestral score, Oxford University Press, p. 12. Horn theme to p. 23; oboe, p. 24, to final Alleluia.

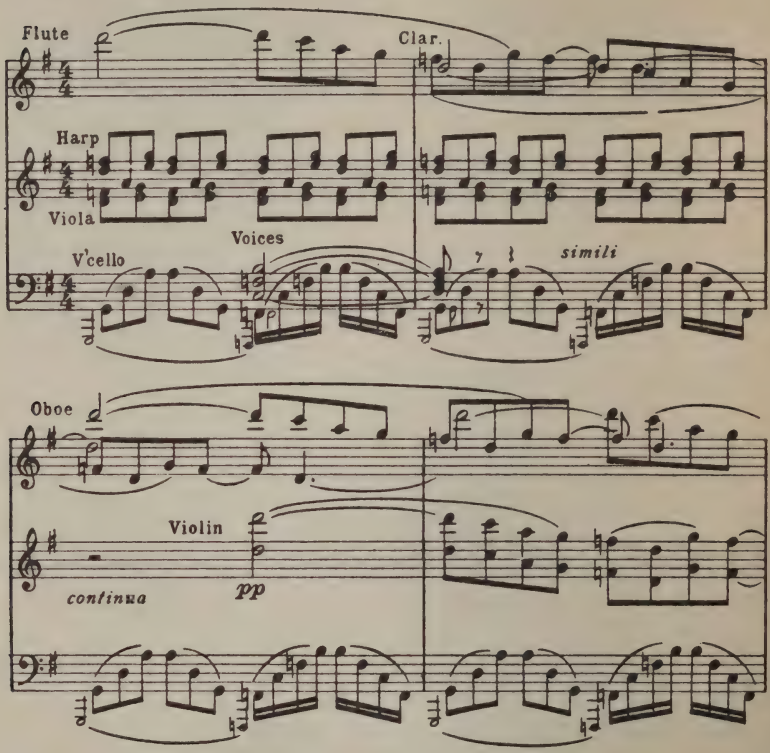
[3] *Flos Campi*. Orchestral score, Oxford University Press.

The works can be grouped and considered according to this imaginary relationship. It is difficult to think of the *Benedicite* without recalling the *Mass* and the *Sancta Civitas*, of *Flos Campi* without *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. In *Flos Campi* the voices in the orchestra move at times in unison groups, which remain in perpetual opposition to other groups also in unison, a method peculiar to Vaughan Williams's technique, which also recurs in the polyphony of the *Mass*.[1]

The superscription announces the second movement of *Flos Campi* thus: *Iam enim hiems transiit ; imber abiit et recessit ; flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, tempus putationis advenit ; vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.* Once more it is nature which calls on the soul in a voice that ascends from earth heavenwards:

A thin wreath of sound hangs about the lean skeleton of the vocal lament. The orchestra absorbs it and reabsorbs it into itself; and then a solo viola emerges, the harps and the other violas play a softly undulating figure, and the flute brings in a new melody of its own,

[1] *Mass in G.* Cf. principal theme with horn theme in *The Shepherds*.

with which the oboe and violins finally join like a shaft of light in an invisible firmament:

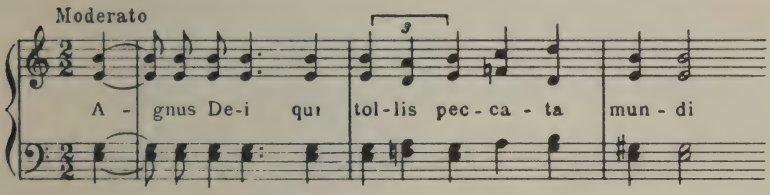


From here onwards through the movements of the suite, voices and instruments sink under this wave of emotion. A liturgy like some archaic fantasy of a poet, the contrasting spirit of modern man—the desire of simplicity and purity; all these seem childish, and yet are but the sharpened senses of the adult mind.

The *Mass* (1922), for soloists and double chorus, is an overpowering choral image, which harmonizes in its construction primitive charm and modern ideas. It is a

polyphonic structure which rises above the archaic verbal suggestiveness of the words of the Mass, and uses the harshness of medieval harmony with fifths moving in strictly conventional patterns together with unexpected buffets and plunges, manipulating in a novel harmonic surrounding the orthodox scheme of imitation.

A magnificent passage of intoning opens the *Agnus Dei*:



Love for the traditional songs of his country springs, in Vaughan Williams, from a natural and vigorous simplicity of mind. It is an attachment whose results are not always good. His two operas, *Hugh the Drover* and *Sir John in Love*, are like folk-song competition festivals. The musician, one might think, has become a collector rather than a composer; he has substituted adaptation for creation. In *Sir John*, for example, he has not been able to withstand the temptation of including an old French tune, *Vrai dieu d'amour, confortez moi.*

But Vaughan Williams is a composer nourished on the sap of English folk-song, and he reconciles its atmosphere with that of his own compositions very well indeed. He handles these melodic flowers like a gardener who is also a poet, and it never occurs to him that they are not grown in his own garden. Indeed, between what is his own and what is borrowed there is no visible line of demarcation in his compositions. It is the identity of the background to the melodies which are taken only as a groundwork for development that is the key to a critical study of the two operas, *Hugh the Drover* and *Sir John in Love*—the

former warmer in sentiment, and the latter more varied and vivacious.

Hugh the Drover is constructed upon a simple framework of English folk-tunes: 'Primroses', 'May-Day Carol', 'Toy Lambs', 'Cockles', 'Morris Dance', 'Maria Martin', 'Maying Song'; but the result is, nevertheless, an organic opera, and not a mere mosaic, as might be imagined. The importance of the motives in themselves is purely secondary in the final scheme; although from them the whole quality of the musical atmosphere is derived, as well as the dramatic emphasis—the action of the moving crowds and changing emotions.

From this communion with popular feeling Vaughan Williams's music emerges as if purified. The scene between Hugh and Mary in the second act is especially worth studying to visualize the fusion of the living idea with the unfertilized material.[1]

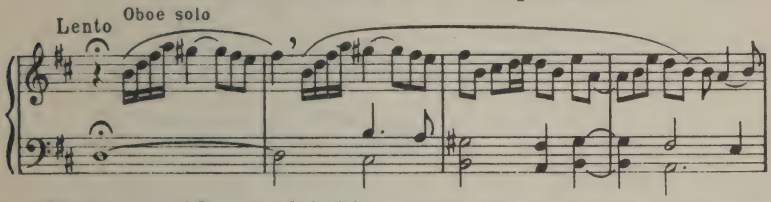
Six years after the earlier opera appeared the light opera, *Sir John in Love*, which, in the course of its four acts faithfully follows the action of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Here also the composer has employed folk-tunes, but with discretion and justification. It has been already shown how he succeeds in elaborating and blending anew the spirit of popular melody. He declares himself that when he could not find an old melody which fitted the dramatic situation, he composed a melody with the same essential character as those that came to hand ready-made. 'When I could not find a suitable folk-tune I have made shift to make up something of my own.'[2] To realize how fully Vaughan Williams has succeeded in making a fine and artistic entity out of his native folk-tunes it is only necessary to hear what he has made of the old tune, 'John, come kiss

[1] *Hugh the Drover*, by Vaughan Williams Voice and pianoforte score. Curwen, pp. 132–47.

[2] *Sir John in Love*, by Vaughan Williams. Voice and pianoforte score. Oxford University Press, 1930 (Preface).

me now', and with what poetic feeling and musical skill he has adapted the gentle melancholy of 'Greensleeves'.

The composer's methods and material are equally noteworthy. At times a lyrical abandon sweeps over the action; as an example which is unrivalled for sheer eloquence of musical language, the one which introduces Ann Page in the first act is worth all the rest for sheer poetic imagery and richness of development[1]:



The magnificent drinking-song quartet a few scenes later, is a superb piece of writing, with a subtle and penetrating flavour, and the entire development of the comedy (even certain weak points, which indeed would need a close scrutiny to be discovered) is musically worked out in the happiest possible manner, sparkling from one episode to another like a crystal-clear fountain.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature in Vaughan Williams is the versatility of a temperament which can find its expression in such diverse idioms, from pastoral contemplation to sparkling comedy. He is far more than a mere rhapsodist. He loves the flowers of traditional melody, and collects them eagerly; but he sees in them something more than their colour and scent, gazing with the eyes of a poet and dreamer and craftsman all in one. And even if he does not mount on wings to the upper reaches of the ether, he can turn his eyes upwards to the clear sky unblinded by the glories of the earth.

All that is traditional in music speaks to him of what is eternal in man; in its simplicity he senses a universal religion.

[1] *Sir John in Love.* Ed. cit., p. 25 et seq.

FERRUCCIO BUSONI

Born Empoli, near Florence, 1 April 1866. His mother, Anna Weiss-Busoni, was an accomplished pianist, and he was brought up from a very early age to be a concert performer. At the age of fifteen he made a successful concert tour of Italy, and became the youngest member since Mozart of the Philharmonic Academy of Bologna. In 1890 he won the Rubinstein prize for his *Konzertstück* for pianoforte and orchestra, op. 31a. In 1899 he was appointed professor at the Helsingfors Conservatoire, and in 1913 director of the Bologna High School for Music, resigning a year later. During the war he lived in America and Switzerland, and in 1920 returned to Berlin as a professor at the Berlin Academy of Arts. He died in 1924.

Principal Compositions

Op. 19. String Quartet.
„ 25. Symphonic Suite for orchestra. 1888.
„ 26. String Quartet.
„ 29. Violin and pianoforte sonata.
„ 31a. *Konzertstück* (Concert Piece). For pianoforte and orchestra.
Indianisches Tagebuch ('An Indian Notebook'). For orchestra. 1915.
Op. 32a. Symphonic Tone-Poem for orchestra.
„ 35a. Violin Concerto.
Turandot. Opera produced Berlin, 1921.
An die Jugend ('To Youth'). For pianoforte. 1909.
Op. 36a. Violin and pianoforte sonata.
Doktor Faustus. Opera produced Dresden, 1925.
Op. 38. *Lustspiel-ouverture* ('Comedy Overture'). For orchestra.
„ 39. Concerto for pianoforte, with orchestra and vocal finale.
„ 42. *Berceuse Elégiaque*. For orchestra.
„ 43. *Nocturne Symphonique*. For orchestra.
„ 44. Indian Fantasia for pianoforte and orchestra. 1914.
„ 45. *Die Brautwahl* ('The Bridal Choice'). Opera produced Hamburg, 1912.
„ 46. *Rondo arlecchinesco*. For orchestra.
„ 47. *Gesang vom Reigen der Geister* ('Song from the Unearthly Region'). For orchestra.
„ 50. *Arlecchino* ('Harlequin'). A light opera, produced Zurich, 1918.
„ 53. Tanzwalzer (Waltzes). For orchestra.
Fantasia Contrapunttistica (on themes from Bach's *Art of Fugue*). For pianoforte.
Various books on music; many arrangements from Bach collected in seven volumes of Bach studies; five books of pianoforte studies.

FERRUCCIO BUSONI

The personality of Busoni, essentially masculine in its strength and profundity, can never fail to awaken interest and admiration. He was inspired by a faith which never wavered; he looked upon music not merely with the hedonistic abandon of the artist, but with the enthusiasm of a deeply religious nature. To one of his complex mental outlook music was not an end in itself, a form of self-expression leading to ecstasy and oblivion; it was an expression of the human quest for reality. Amid the mêlée of modern creeds, Ferruccio Busoni obeyed needs and stimuli which were solely his own—needs which came from within, wholly alien to the naturalistic atmosphere which exercised so strong an influence on the outlook of his contemporaries. He was stirred by personal experiences derived equally from his contact with contemporary movements and from past history. Where he was in spiritual touch with his contemporaries, it was not because he had borrowed something from them, or because he was influenced by the aims of current thought, but because his mind, imbued with modern feeling, carried him on to the same plane.

The fact that Busoni the pianist met with the unanimous success that was denied to him as a creative artist, is not vitally important. But if we wish to understand the singular nature of this most uncommon artist, it is important to establish the connection between the many forms his artistic activities have taken. It is a commonplace among superficial critics to say that Busoni was a

supreme pianist and a mediocre composer—a cheap distinction, an evasion of the real difficulties only worthy of the Pilates of amateurishness. Busoni was pianist, thinker, and creative artist in one—three facets of the same spiritual prism. At times, the light reflected by the resplendent crystal of his soul blinds us; at times it is darker; at times dim and cold—but it is still fed by the same source. It remains a dominating thought which never becomes pure thought or pure lyricism, and yet asserts itself in characteristics that are majestic—almost hieratical. His speech—whether in word or sound, as creator or interpreter, has the stamp of finality. There is something pontifical about it: a majestic idealism, which was never able to take on definite shape, but which, in spite of its imperfection, retains the dream of a perfect world. At bottom it is history which, in its individualized and dialectic form, lives in Ferruccio Busoni. It is the soul of centuries taking shape in tonal structures, and in the suggestion of ideas which can only be made manifest in and through music. He approaches the ideal in art; the anxious quests and passionate aspirations of the spirit find for him a concrete existence in musical problems. It is as though his mentality forces him to see the good and the beautiful only through the nebula of music.

This musical concentration at high tension, a combination of logic and lyricism, becomes a stumbling-block in his path when he has to build up his own immediate world of music. Between himself and his inner thought there is always as mediator a technique of expression, an idiom already formed which he can master only as an interpreter. When Busoni writes music he is an interpreter just as in playing—with this difference; that when he writes it his tendency is to create an *a priori* musical world, while in playing he dealt with a musical world which already exists. In

the act of playing his character as interpreter was identified with the task of the pianist, and, thanks to the mediation of an instrument which he spiritually dominates, achieved an artistic result that embraces the whole of his vast and powerful experience. When, on the other hand, he must invent from the outset, the interpreter in him became merely an obstacle in the way of a living, human work of art. The historic spirit which originally enriched his character seems to repent of its munificence, and, in revenge, keeps him from hanging on to its skirts. For Busoni, in reality, the future lies in the past. When he asserts that music is but a new-born babe amongst the arts, that her few centuries of history are a single instant in comparison with the future that is hers, he is only fulfilling the conception of a past reflected in the future. Everything in him adheres to this vision, fed by his musical experience: he tends always to idealize impressions which made a profound impression on him, living in and for music alone. His dream of the future is the apotheosis of the religious feeling kindled in him by Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. Hence, Ferruccio Busoni, while aglow with this mystic sense of the future, is never a futurist. He sees music as a posterity which escapes the burden of an empiric reality, and fades away in the vague and boundless image of the ideal. And what is the ideal for Ferruccio Busoni? This is the critical question, the fundamental problem for those who would wish to understand and discover the work of his personality. Busoni's own conception of it is not very clear. His metaphysical idea is never defined, and wavers between mysticism and philosophy. It is a contemplation which, like religious thought, has the appearance of revelation; and, like philosophy, of a rational method; but at heart it is a religion poor in faith, and a philosophy weak in logic. It is a spurious ideal—the source of all the evils which

weary Busoni as a thinker and clip his wings as an artist. It is a kind of historic intuition on which he can only gaze as Cagliostro gazed at his magic flask. Hence he does not create—he re-creates. But for the same reason he can only proclaim his new lyricism with difficulty, and he remains, above all, the prodigious interpreter through whom the pianoforte has begun to speak the language of centuries yet to come.

On the keyboard Busoni was a sculptor. Sound became a block which was intensified into life under his fingers. He is the same in his transcriptions; and with his death we have not lost the marvellous pianist he was, for he lives in these transcriptions which are all his own, forming a new artistic form undeserving of so despised a title.

The Bach transcriptions of Busoni are entities in which both Bach and Busoni live at the same level of interest and emotion. Busoni finds his goal in the personality of Bach, as a poet finds his goal in nature. It is a past world, but one still alive and pulsating, which Busoni carries within himself; a world which he develops and transforms as if by magic.

'Magic': the very word was dear to Busoni. With an æsthetic sense derived from intuition rather than justified by philosophy, he saw in art the essential power of transformation of reality. Whatever is practical and everyday must, in a work of art, rise to a higher sphere; the object must change as by magic and, whatever be its new shape, alter its inner significance. The stage is the mirror of life, but a magic mirror—else it would simply reproduce vulgar things. Magic, for Busoni, is the artist's power of transmuting the meaning of the letter, of impregnating all existence with a new essence. The real becomes the ideal; form is born out of matter, and knowledge out of chance. Certainly Busoni's æsthetic ideas are entirely personal, bounded by certain conditions, and to be taken in a relative sense:

but how valuable this relativity is towards understanding him! Busoni's æsthetics are a spiritual autobiography; his inner life is lived in a state of dream, of contemplation of a universal principle—and his conception of music loses itself, in the end, among the cloudy vapours of mysticism.

The religious mood of the artist becomes mysticism when it is translated into thought. Music is for him a form of eternal harmony,[1] it comes from above[2]; it is part of a pulsating universal life.[3] Music is both outside of Time and within it; it is the essence which gives us an intelligible representation of the otherwise elusive conception of the ideality of Time.[4] In relation to other arts music is like a child, who although having learnt to walk, still needs someone to guide him: a divine creature, light and airy, which men have bound by rules and oppressed by their tutelage so that it can but limp along where its whole desire is to overleap the rainbow.[5] These dreamer's fancies should not arouse the suspicion that Busoni gave up his life of thought to sterile excursions amongst the clouds of æsthetic mysticism. If his conception of art is prejudiced by arbitrary distinctions —like the fundamental one between form and spirit— and if the new æsthetics does not attach itself to a concrete system, yet his thought at times formulates objectives, truths full of sound good sense. For instance, the following maxim: Art-forms are all the more lasting when they are kept close to the essence of their particular artistic species, and remain pure in their means and practical aims. Busoni also succeeds perfectly in piercing the mentality of the Academician—the chemist of music:

> The absolute music of the grammarians is something barren, which always reminds me of rows of desks, all the old rules of tonic

[1] *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, second edition. Insel, Leipzig, pp. 14, 22, 40.
[2] Ibid., p. 2. [3] Ibid., p. 16. [4] Ibid., p. 23. [5] Ibid., p. 8.

and dominant, development and coda. When I hear the second violin busy imitating, a fourth lower, the first violin who went before him, I always envisage it as a useless race to arrive nowhere. This brand of technique should be called 'symmetrical' music. It was originally born when some musicians had poured their spirit and sensibility into a form which actually was suited to express their personality and their time. But the grammarians have made a parcel of rules out of these men's individual expression which has been identified with music for all time.

In some of his definitions he reveals the creative power of the artist and thinker:

Tradition is but the clay mask of life which, handed down through many years by countless artists, still reveals its likeness to the original.

Concerning the task of the executant he speaks in a way worthy of his qualities as an interpreter:

Notation is only an ingenious means for determining musical ideas in such a way that they can be made alive again. It is, after all, the portrait of a living model. The interpreter must loosen the rigidity of the mere notation, and bring it to new life. Pedagogues, instead, demand of the interpreter that he should reproduce that rigidity; they believe a performance to be perfect when it renders literally the black and white symbols. For pedants these are the essential music; a work must always sound identical, no matter by whom and in what mood it happens to be performed. But it is impossible thus to go against the very nature of all art, which every day is reborn in a new shape. Great artists play their own works always differently; at times they transform themselves as though shedding a skin; it is as if they were often unable to express themselves fully in the first place by means of notation.

An interesting light on Busoni is shown by his bold insight into the true nature of the dual modality of major and minor. The prejudices of academic amateurs as regards the symbolic value of the modes are well known—prejudices equivalent to the confession of an anti-musical æstheticism. If the modes had in themselves an expressive value as expression, the value of

artistic creation would vanish, for expression would be there ready-made. Apart from the fine irony of his jest on this commonplace, Busoni feels that the dual modality between major and minor is essentially fictitious. It might be said that the minor is a modification of the major and, in any case, there is nothing in either of them of the substantial diversity found in, say, the distribution of the intervals of the Greek and the liturgical modes. Busoni says:

> It is odd that major and minor should be always placed in antithesis. Both have the same features—at times serene, at times dark; a slight touch of the brush is enough to pass from one to the other. But we know that major and minor constitute an identity with a double meaning, and that the twenty-four scales are really the transposition of the first two—a transposition which occurs eleven times. Thus, without efforts, we can appreciate the true unity of our modal system. And so the conception of relationship and the affinity of the scales fall to the ground, and with them the whole theory of degrees and relations. We have but one scale—and it is a poor thing.

Essentially a creature of his epoch, Busoni feels the urgent need of widening the tonal panorama and, familiar with the historical definition of harmony, he grasps quickly the essential modality of every harmonic scale. His instinct as a living musician urges him towards radical renewal; but not so violently as to make him break with the tradition in which his artistic soul was born. Hence he accepts neither polytonality nor atonality, but only a natural appreciation of the modal conception restored to its practical musical form.

The music of Ferruccio Busoni corresponds perfectly to a shy and austere temperament, in which the suggestions of a pontifically solemn culture predominate. It is a music which performs the functions of form; with form as the main theme; a form that adheres closely to the times of which it is the product and embodiment, and is a true crystallization of historic

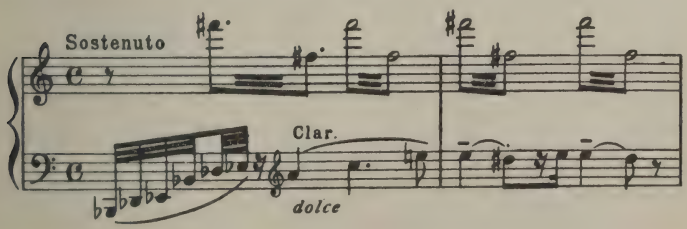
growths. In it can be found the whole of Busoni—his colour, his characteristic episodes, and his surpassing efforts, the lyrical impetus attenuated, disciplined, and held in line with the functions of development and construction. But in this concept of form the inner experience of the artist finds so much inspiration as to lose its central individuality. Busoni lacks an individual lyric idiom; once immersed in the thick forest of constructive development he forgets himself; he becomes a priest of the musical idea; he binds together with the iron will of faith those single moments of a musical idiom which build up a stirring appeal. This is not impotence; it springs from the very nature of his emotion, soaked as it is in history and past civilization. His culture is made up of the complete penetration of experience into thought and feeling, and is not purely a decorative adornment or a stylistic imitation.

Often the outcome of this experience becomes too heavy and dark; it generates half-shadows or downright darkness, and one waits vainly for something with a true life of its own. From the two string quartets (youthful but ponderous works) to the sonatas for violin and pianoforte (the second in particular is typical of Busoni's musical characteristics) may be seen the same constructive force urged on by an historical experience, incapable of transmitting itself into immediate and personal lyric appeal.

There are excellences which are realized with difficulty in the performance, and which, to be properly understood, need analysis and thoughtful study. Given such limited spiritual conditions, no doubt any work of art runs the risk of having only a negative value. Art is the direct and immediate affirmation of a personality in which historic experience has become merged and consumed. The epoch of which we are a fragment and a product has to appear in the outward traits of

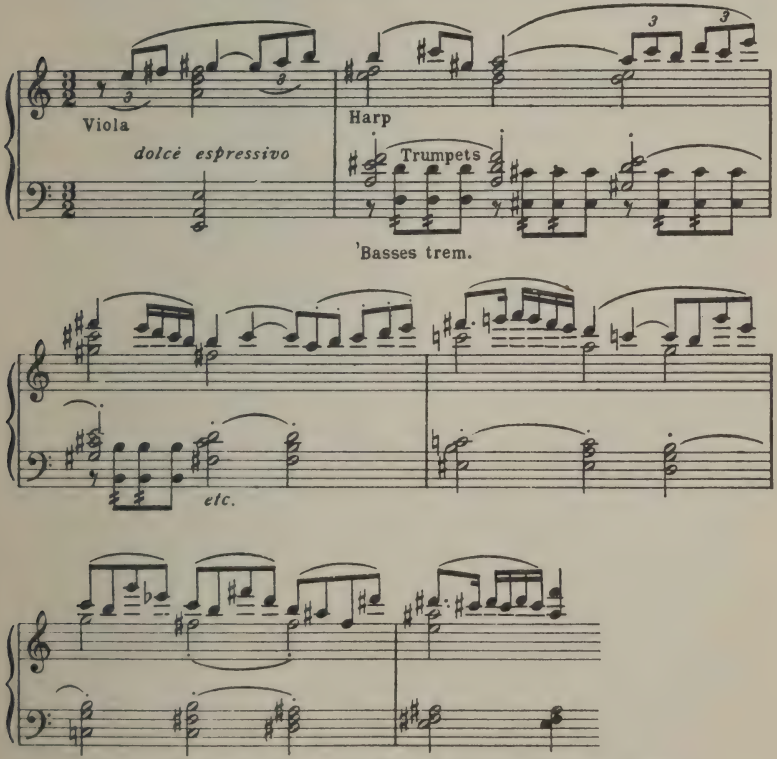
our spiritual figure only as a reminiscence; it must generate an elaborate resemblance—yet not a slavish copy—and bring into being a new reality. The laborious travail must not be too apparent: the child illumines the world, and no trace remains of the bitter pangs through which he was brought to life. All this is true, and pure art does not admit concessions. But Ferruccio Busoni should not be considered solely as a pure artist any more than the power and majesty of his ideas should lead us to consider him as a pure philosopher. He is an encyclopædic spirit who asserts himself as thinker, musician, and poet together. Hence the singular fascination that he exerts and that sense of greatness and profundity which his work inspires.

The power of a stern musical culture which goes straight back to Bach in its quality and substance determines a natural antagonism in Busoni to the attractions of the romantic sirens, and preserves him from that bastardization of style which was a product of the decadent period immediately following Wagner. A sense of harmonious construction helps him to avoid rhetorical exaggeration, although, at times, in the laboured course of his career as a stylist, one meets virtuoso disquisitions of a Lisztian type, the substitution of a Schumannesque accent or a twisted Wagnerian chromaticism.

Here, for instance, is an example from *Doktor Faustus*, which resembles *Parsifal* too closely:

An admirable quality in Busoni is the sureness of his procedure, which he has not acquired through didactic experience, but which comes directly from natural inclination. He suggests one who, having listened to eminent men with great attention, has made the inner substance of their speech so much his own that when he comes to speak himself he does not appear to repeat the words of others, but to express his own ideas. Musical speech comes from him freely, and it does not matter if, in the course of it, one meets rubbish—as happens in the *Fantasia Indiana* (1914) where there are found all the conventionalities of the *concertante* style. Again, in the Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra with chorus (1906), heterogeneous elements are found, alternating beauty and ugliness. In the first movement (Prologue and Introito), alongside various colourless incidents of formal mechanism, there are episodes of a lyricism which rises on the wings of free fancy; in the *Pezzo Giocoso* there is a laboured elaboration of the sad Neapolitan *Fenesta Che Lucive*—a melody to which Busoni is much attached, since he uses it again in the following piece, *All' Italiana*, and, much less happily, in one of the unpleasant *Elegie per Pianoforte*. What Busoni calls *All' Italiana* is an admirable symphonic tarantella animated by the incandescent force of an elaborate and dashing popular appeal. The best part of the Concerto ends in original fashion with the *cantico* in the chorus of male voices, and provides a practical test of the æsthetic ideas of Busoni—of his belief in soaring beyond empiric forms in a musical form, definite, and spiritually comprehensive.

Busoni's music is constantly changing. Ugliness and beauty, worth and worthlessness in his work succeed each other so rapidly that often one has hardly time to distinguish them. There are commonplaces and lively conceptions, heavy designs lacking any touch of

personality, and emotional episodes intimately expressed —sparks of genial fire, and parts that are mechanical and second-hand. Sometimes it seems that he is on the point of grasping the beauty he has longed for all his life; horizons of the future which appear but for an instant, elusive as the flying moments themselves. Such episodes are found chiefly in *Doktor Faustus*—the work which most helps us to understand and define Busoni's mind. An example of it is the lovely *Sarabande*, a symphonic intermezzo of intense lyrical life, where the fundamental situation of the Faust-Busoni[1] drama finds its being.



[1] See also Prologue, Evocation of the Spirits, and Second Finale.

Next to the *Sarabanda* must be remembered the *Rondo Arlecchinesco* (1916), which is amongst the best of his orchestral works, and one of the most vigorous symphonic creations of the age. In this masterly score there lives the spirit of the Commedia dell' Arte; it has living rhythms and the quiet melodic song of a serenade; but its humour runs away from foolish sentiment, and bursts into laughter like a comic tenor. The comedy is at heart quite serious; the laughter is the mask of grave thoughts. It is not the tragic humour of the old romantic nor the scoffing cynicism of the modern jester, but the smile of a serious person, a thoughtful, reflected laughter, the metaphysical joy which, the very moment felt, is interrupted by the eternal question—why? In Busoni's music there is always this tormenting questioning, like that of a child for whom the greatest things resolve themselves into questioning: 'What do I want?'—a semi-moral, semi-æsthetic query which Busoni lays down as the basis of his *Doktor Faustus*, and which forms the living centre of his existence. After *Brautwahl* (1913), and *Arlecchino* (1920), *Doktor Faustus* is his most planned and complex work. For Busoni, fortunately, there exists no problem of music in opera, but only the problem of the music which finds in the greatest scope for fertilization by external ideas. 'Music remains always and exclusively music, no matter under what form it appears.' Thus he wrote in the explanatory pamphlet of *Doktor Faustus*.[1] The division between the various genders and forms is purely empirical; take any of the operas of Mozart—it might be the score of a symphony; take one of his quartets, and you will discover in it purely operatic scenes.[2] What counts is the unity of the musical style, the temperament of the artist, the reality of his creation.

[1] *Über die Moglichkeiten der Oper und die Partitur der 'Doktor Faustus'*, Leipsig, 1926.
[2] Ibid. (p. 7).

In *Doktor Faustus* the great individuality of Busoni's conscience is always evident, whether it is classified by means of art or clouded by mere endeavour. Busoni's Faust is more doctor than man, and resembles Busoni more than any other man; he is intellect become action, or, to be more correct, intellect which tries to become action. There is the crisis of will-power; the conflict between action, thought, and aspiration. If less clearly defined, the character of Mephistopheles is more original, and he is much less of a devil than his name suggests. When Faust first calls upon him (one of the most beautiful moments in the opera), Mephistopheles behaves like the spirit we know. But as soon as the pact is concluded and he becomes Faust's companion, he throws off his supernatural trappings, and assumes many shapes in human form. In the scene at the Court of Parma he acts now as secretary to Faust, now as a magician, and as the Court Chamberlain he communicates to the duke the trick played upon him by Faust with the duchess. In the tavern scene Faust, more doctor than ever, disputes with his students, the argument being carried out half seriously, half humorously, when Mephistopheles arrives clad as a courier, covered with dust, with tidings which announce the death of the duchess, and throws at Faust's feet the body of a child presented to him by the noble lady just deceased. Unspeakable horrors? Nothing of the kind; the courier picks up the child and shows it to be a bundle of straw. Do you not believe it? He tosses it on the fire. In the last episode, which takes place before the cathedral of Würtemburg, Faust, who has become the prodigal son of Faith and Goodness, meets a beggar woman asking for alms. But the beggar woman appears like the Duchess of Parma offering her child. He turns towards the church, but the entrance is barred by the shadow of Valentine. In a dumb prayer he looks at

the crucifix, but Christ assumes the appearance of a pagan Helen. His dreams fight against his faith. But Faust will find himself again beyond good and evil; the doctor becomes the pupil of Nietzsche; he will die, but his son will live—to continue his ideal existence. He falls dead, but a naked youth rises from the ground where the child was lying. He carries in his hand a leafy branch, and goes away towards the future—the symbol of human ideal and will which cannot be extinguished. A night-watchman (Mephistopheles) passes, and lifts on his shoulder the body of Faust, and goes quietly off with slow steps.

In this drama Mephistopheles represents the heavy and mortal side of humanity; he is man who remains man; who, satisfied with his limitations, accepts the fact and comfortably rubs his hands. He is not the 'spirit who denies', but the finite being in whose hands the idea becomes ashes, and reality a convenient makeshift. The supernatural rests in Faust—the representation of restless humanity wearing out its existence between good and evil—but in vain.

A powerful drama, doubtless, but one which in practice betrays the inconvenient aspects of theatrical expression without solving the plastic representation of the intellectual life of the dramatis personæ. The spectroscopes of the stage—ghosts, apparitions, magical evocations—are but a projection of Faust's own mentality fighting between the opposing forces of his consciousness. But from a scenic standpoint the representation of this state of mind is inadequate, for the spectator, to find his bearings, needs to reflect, and even if warned beforehand, is apt, during the stage performance, to be attracted by the spectacle, and prevented from thinking. Musically, the work is full of fine strokes, so much so that it is essential to a critical knowledge of the much discussed and little understood personality of Busoni. It is a

score conceived with formidable mastery of technique, and if it does not definitely attain to the state of a pure work of art, it is because the Faust which it portrays does not realize fully his idea of superman. Like his own Faust, Busoni dips too much into intellectuality—and the artist's life must be of the senses as well as of the intellect.

The opera remains a definite synthesis of the whole of the stylistic methods of Busoni, which culminates in the evocation of Faust, in the scene at the Court of Parma, and in the magnificent *Sarabande*. The stylistic parabola from Bach to Wagner is completed with this opera, which is the swan song of the great German of Empoli; it is the history of his musical soul—and a true history. There is in it not a barren adoration of the past, but the conscious abandon of his own self in that past—reaction and criticism, intelligence and re-creation.

Much is said to-day about the growth of a classical renaissance. When we envisage it, let us not forget that Ferruccio Busoni was the first classic of modern times, and, above all others, embodied the ideal of German cultural penetration into the Italian spirit.

ERNEST BLOCH

Born Geneva, 24 July 1880. Studied under Jaques-Dalcroze and Louis Rey between 1894 and 1897. From 1897 to 1899 he attended the Conservatoire at Brussels, studying violin under Ysaye and composition under F. Rasse, and was also a composition student of Ivan Knorr at Frankfurt-am-Main. From 1911 he taught at the Geneva Conservatoire. In 1915 he went to America as conductor for Maud Allan, the dancer. In 1917 he became a teacher at the David Mannes School of Music in New York. In 1920 he became head of the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Principal Compositions

La Montagne. Symphony.
Poème Exotique. For orchestra.
Vivre-Aimer. Symphonic poems for orchestra. 1900.
Jeremiah. Poem for pianoforte.
Symphony in C sharp minor. 1901–2.
Historiettes au Crépuscule. Four pieces for voice and pianoforte. 1903.
Hiver-Printemps. Symphonic poem. 1905.
Poèmes d'Automne. For pianoforte (also orchestrated). 1906.
Macbeth. Opera, produced Paris 1910.
Israel. Symphony with voice parts. 1912–15.
Trois Poèmes Juifs. For orchestra. 1913.
Night. Poem for string quartet.
Schelòmo. Rhapsody for voices and orchestra. 1915.
String Quartet in B minor. 1915.
Jézabel. Opera. 1918.
Suite for viola and pianoforte. 1919.
Sonata for violin and pianoforte. 1920.
Psalms 114 and 137 for soprano solo and orchestra. 1921.
Psalm 22 for baritone solo and orchestra. 1921.
Quintet (pianoforte and strings). 1923.
Three Landscapes. For string quartet.

ERNEST BLOCH

ERNEST BLOCH is an epic composer; that is to say, the metal of his idiom was forged in the furnace of past ages. But his melody is fired by an energy and passion entirely of the present.

His feeling for historical continuity springs from one thing—the consciousness of the racial spirit, visualized as a tragic and epic drama. Hence in his music there sound always the 'ancestral voices prophesying war', the age-long hints of strife and sorrow—individual notes in a strongly-sculptured mass of sound. Bloch's works always move with the majesty of a funeral cortège. There is something Homeric in the make-up of this twentieth-century Jewish composer.

The symphony *Israel* has episodes that recall vividly the Twenty-fourth Book of the Iliad. Those brass instruments blaring high notes which die away into a sob; the theme which is urged onwards until it trembles with its own intensity; the mounting waves of sound from the wood instruments (a Biblical fanfare) which overtop the strings and absorb them in a strong, masculine sonority — the broad melody that rises, vigorous and sorrowful, like a hymn and a prophecy; that monumental sonority—these are all elements of epic grandeur. This is the essence of Bloch: lyrics of an heroic passion; an inward torment which becomes eloquent in lamentation, or a sorrow which finds no expression but becomes part of the soul, dominating and feeding upon itself.

Bloch is the prince of modern musicians. The spirit of the new century consolidates itself in him, goes

beyond the experience of the senses and becomes a religion. Thus the highest musical manifestation of the new age takes place outside the traditional surroundings of Latin culture. The Jews have contributed much to the history of music, but a true musical Judaism has never existed. Jewish musicians have invariably taken their place in history as musicians, not as Jews. It is otherwise with Bloch. He is a Jew whose music is as all-embracing as the Old Testament. He has a vision of the Biblical world before the coming of the Messiah. He is a modern poet whose heart is in the almost forgotten past.

The art of the Renaissance had produced an æsthetically new religious vision, whose function was to humanize a faith which had come into contact with an earthly civilization. But the art of Bloch contemplates religion in a vision which follows the course of tradition backwards, and refreshes itself in its original fountain. There is no need to look askance if a voice so pure—the purest of our time—sounds foreign to our traditional spirit. What treasures of poetry throughout the centuries has not the Christian spirit produced? How many masterpieces have not been inspired by the human mind absorbed in contemplation of Christ and of the Virgin Mother? The religion of Christ adapted itself into history, becoming unified with the spirit of civilization, and although its essence remained the same, it acquired new aspects. Thus the art of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of the Reformation were all profoundly religious and Christian. In the nineteenth century the Christian world was split into its constituent parts, yet without changing greatly—except in its outward form. A new man is born for whom the Kingdom of Heaven is no longer an object of contemplation, but one for analysis and reasoning. The contrast between nature and the ideas of heaven and earth, between reason and faith, between revolution

and reaction, become part of the story of the nineteenth century. After the drama of romanticism which opposed to Bach's Gospel of St. Matthew the redemption of Parsifal (the moment when the individual conscience, having hymned its faith and its despair, ended by flying to the inspired madness of Friedrich Nietzsche), what new religious spirit could reanimate this old world of ours, which the twentieth century found immersed in a sea of blood? The religion of the highest senses; the myth of democracy; sensuality turned into an idea of mystic contemplation (a cathedral where incense is burned in the censer of J.-K. Huysmans); St. Sebastian adored in a pagan myth; the psycho-analysis of *Salomé*, and of the complete impressionists; neo-classicism carried to its highest pitch.

The Christian soul knew no other musical testimony of its faith than an archæological monument derived from the rule of St. Benedict. The Gregorian revival was a masterpiece of science and faith; but it did not cause a single ripple in the story of art. But some musicians, however, warmed by the fire of their own ideas—ideas (unfortunately) completely theoretical—persuaded themselves and others that the lost life of Christian poetry could be renewed in modern lyricism: it was an illusion.

Bloch represents a musical instinct which is not of this world. He set out to write music without giving much thought to the subconscious tradition of his blood. He did not begin by a controversial reaction against those schools which a consciousness of his Hebrew nationalism might have made him hate. On the contrary, he learnt from Debussy how to handle his palette, and to mature the harmonic experience of which he stood in need. Strauss and Dukas also taught him how certain orchestral ensembles are obtainable. He never posed as an archæologist or a preacher. He

never said: A problem of national music has to be solved: I am the Lord's anointed. He let himself float with the currents of his time, avoiding none, and reacting to them with complete independence of spirit. He fell a victim to opera for a time, and projected a *Macbeth*, which but partly realizes his ambitions. But he passed beyond this point, and set boldly forth to discover himself.

The strength of Bloch lies in the fact that his musical reactions are immediate and spontaneous. But it is the spontaneity of a cultivated mind. Stravinsky is no less spontaneous in the genuine forms of art, but the barbarian predominates in him. Bloch on the contrary resuscitates a primitive outlook in its tradition, each maintaining their individual character. The outcome is music of irresistible melodic charm, angular, yet compelling, sharp-edged, and tender at the same time.

This Swiss *émigré* carries the Bible written on his heart. One may listen casually to *Schelòmo*, to *Israel*, to any of the pieces belonging to the Jewish cycle, and the mind will instantly envisage the wild scenery and the infinite poetry of Holy Scripture. In its spiritual nakedness his lyricism touches to the fount of all life. This constitutes his point of spiritual contact between the Old Testament and the Homeric poems. They are two worlds, profound and sublime, diverse and distant —yet close in the grandiose power of an idiom of unadorned simplicity, by means of which great thoughts are expressed. Unadorned and essential is the form on which the basis of human existence exists; in such epigraphic speech moves the profound lyricism of fundamental states of soul, and the shapes of eternal human reality. In this reality Bloch has plunged; and he has drawn from it *Israel*, *Schelòmo*, the three Hebrew poems, the Psalms 22, 114, and 137, the Quartet, the Viola suite, the Sonata for violin and piano, and the Quintet for strings and piano.

The essence of Bloch's religious feeling is dramatic; his lyricism is not one of contemplation, but of contrast between various dialectically opposed energies. He may give us a melodic line perfectly composed and solemn, but the edge is touched by the motion of contrasting forces; to be and not to be are reconciled in one sentiment—the quest for a Promised Land, for the absolute spirit—a quest destined to remain unsatisfied for all eternity. This dissatisfaction of the spirit could only be overcome in the mystic abandon of a communion between the Heaven of Jesus and the Earth of Christ. The dramatic reality of Bloch's Judaism, which has moved many to whom Judaism is wholly foreign, is based on the fact that his original motive coincides with that kind of paganism which permeates the more subtle expressions of modern life and culture. Christ, King of Heaven and Earth, has dominated and still dominates; but in his kingdom literature and æstheticism now claim as great a share as once did politics. Christ lives in our souls at various moments—in the ceremonials of the Church, in the education of ourselves and our children, in times of meditation and criticism; He is a harbour of refuge when despair seizes us. But He is an object of adoration; not a subject of action. His Kingdom is always to come; the world evades His divine embrace. Our life in its tragic reality alternates between sensuality and spirituality in a way which excludes the realization of the absolute spirit. Christ has been killed more cruelly by the Christian world than by the Jews. We deny Him while we acknowledge Him, and blaspheme while we adore Him. This state of things, which is of yesterday and to-day, as well as of twenty centuries ago, places us on the same level as the dispersed progeny of Jacob. Bloch's music is near to us because it has the dramatic sense of a rejected humanity.

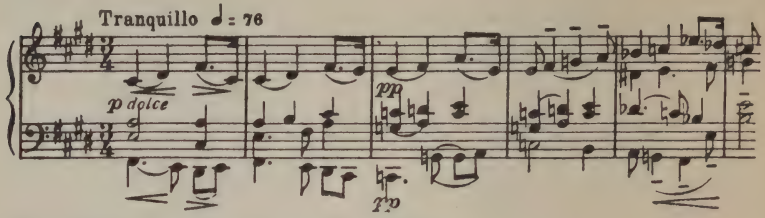
His music is permeated by the sense of isolation of the

Jewish soul in the universe, conscious of its destiny—to wait while wandering. It is a race fused in unity of spirit, and broken in the betrayals of flesh and sin; to which the earth wherein it must wander seems narrow, a true prison; destined never to halt within its own frontiers, but to live without peace, and without country, in a perpetual exile. Before it is the vision of that terrible God, whose name is not spoken, the image of power and revenge—the God of battles and of lightning, who reveals Himself in the fiery mountain. The sinning soul torn from its spirit, like a flower cut from its root, calls to Him in its sorrow. This state of soul, historic in the people of Israel—'chosen', yet oppressed by sin—is the symbol of humanity torn between the spirit and the flesh. The beauty of Bloch's art lies in having penetrated this conflict on the far side of mysticism, but in the shape of a human and concrete drama. In this rests the value of the conscious Hebraic spirit of his music. The policy and sectarianism of the synagogue has nothing to do with it; there is no liturgical obsession, but a lyrical affirmation of a spiritual attitude whose historic valuation coincides with the ideas of to-day. The last word, in pure music, on Christianity, had been spoken by Richard Wagner, for whom the torment of Tristan is purified in the enchantment of Parsifal. Siegfried's heroism reaches beyond humanity in the spirit of the Redeemer. The art of Bloch does not go beyond earthly limits, but it dramatizes the adventure of the spirit on earth. The composer does not go, he cannot see beyond mortal life. But he contemplates life in its inmost being with its conflicts, and his emotion is penetrated by the antithesis between a seen good and the impossibility of grasping it. His music remains in a state of paganism in so far as it is impregnated with natural sensibility, and vibrating with barbaric impulses, but it is also full of spirituality which provides the essence

of every one of its emotional motives. The drama of centuries is revived with the power of a new spirit. Modern sensual decadence is reconciled with the centuries-old exigencies of religion. It is the first musical conception of the twentieth century, in which the individual conquers lyrical egotism, and sings once more of the idea The heart of the drama is no longer a carnal impulse—whether refined or not by culture—but an inner clash of spirit which develops the deeper it goes. Bloch is the 'new man', who resolves experience and feeling in a new religious instance which appears to be so genuine that it does not become rarefied in literary mysticism, but touches earth in a revelation of humanity primitive and impulsive. Instead of abandon there is frenzy and contortion; instead of pity, heartbreak; instead of resignation, passion. For this reason only a Jew could have hymned this ideal which adheres so closely to modern life. The Jew draws his religious despair with the same inexhaustible, tormented ardour with which the modern soul seeks its spiritual existence.

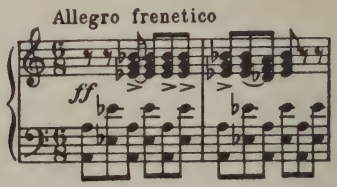
The work which represents most adequately this order of ideas is the String Quartet—a masterly composition, albeit imperfect through a certain want of balance between intention and realization, between the written note and the sound, yet one of incomparable tragic potency. The Sonata for violin and pianoforte also deals with the same ideas, but questionable points are more frequent, and in the Quartet the lyrical power is greater. In the latter work the first *adagio* has extraordinary powers of penetration. The fantastic alternate rhythms, the budding of melodic themes which are endless and unresolved, the suspensions, the repetitions; the clarity of the design, the fugue, the intensity of the travail which evolves, now softly, and now rising high like a pæan to quell the underlying fear—these are elements of a rare artistic realization. There is a

continual succession of episodes of exquisite harmonies such as:



and many others could be quoted.

In the *allegro*, however, the result often does not come up to expectations, not because there is a want of energy, but because there is too much. Vitality becomes fury, and in its rapidity and ardour movement degenerates into mere tumult. The design is clear and evident; the execution of it full of *élan*, but the rhythmic impetus is so overwhelming that sounds lose their hold on the listener who is merely baffled.

Passages such as this cannot sound clearly in the limited sonority of the string quartet:

These are, however, but passing moments. The artistic conception, fundamentally rich and pregnant, never halts in its development, and the episodes follow one another in the marvellous score with inexhaustible variety and originality.[1] The corners and angles which at times make the Quartet, the Sonata, and also the Suite for viola, so difficult for the listener, must be noted,

[1] See *Quartet*, Universal Edition, pp. 23–31, 62–4.

not so much as defects in the execution, as part of the elementary character of the conception. This is of special importance for the Quartet, which as regards breadth of conception goes beyond all existing works —with the exception of Beethoven's later quartets. The Quintet, on the other hand, is conceived in a more serene and luminous spiritual atmosphere. The softness of the melodic surface, the mastery of the expression which evolves without hindrance, the definite conquest of certain sorrowful attitudes which in many others (as well as at times in Bloch) are more evident in the form than in the spirit—these factors permit us to look upon the Quintet for piano and strings as the masterpiece of modern chamber music.

Bloch's lyrical emotion expresses itself in music in a form attuned to its character, which is pre-eminently epic and religious, but also consonant with the historic destiny of the symphonic form. The repetition of the themes, developments, the returns, the breaking of the themes into 'cells', which are developed again in antithesis to their former statements — all these form the very backbone of his style. He reveals himself only in and through form, and we, in fact, know Bloch's ideas in respect of art only through his æsthetic volition in the practical shape of a work of music.

It is interesting to follow the way in which the sensuous æstheticism of the contemporary musical spirit becomes style by obeying a powerful dramatic personality. If we examine for a moment any one of the more notable works of Bloch for orchestra or chamber music (it does not matter which; they are all essentially symphonic), we shall find it far from easy to reconcile the development of the musical idiom with the set forms sanctioned by practice, whether cyclic, those of the sonata-symphony, or the free and literary forms of the symphonic poem.

In the music of Bloch there is no 'symphony' in the strict sense of a set design, because the poetic spirit calls forth in the composer a virtue of stylistic enterprise which does not adapt itself to an objective schematic order. The world of images grows in plastic sonorous movements, every one of which is different and individual; but the transition of image into sound does not take place in such a way that the form can clear itself completely of its literary or figurative suggestions. Nor, on the other hand, does it happen (as in the symphonic poems of Liszt and Strauss) that the image retains in music its figurative plasticity, so that the sound-structure can never correspond to it as pure music, just as the image never becomes the absolute work of music. This is the incurable weakness of the symphonic poems of Strauss. In Bloch's music instead there is a conciliation between the seen world and the musical world because the figuration suggested by the programme identifies itself with the elaboration. It hence becomes style—which never happens in the case of Strauss, for whom romantic sentiment, classical form, and dramatic gesture go together without ever forming an harmonic entity. In Bloch the musical instinct absorbs every other mental preoccupation, and dominates without undergoing any real metamorphosis. Thus form is created, the pure form of a known world without being the cause of dualism; like a sheet of water which reflects light and images which become one with it, but without in any way altering the nature of its own element.

This stylistic power of identifying form with the apprehension of the object is the secret of every work of art. In the specific case of an artist like Bloch its particular value is heightened by the way in which the creative process becomes quickened by individualism—especially in his reactions to the environment and to

the music of the century from which he comes. And in Bloch—the true Bloch of *Israel*, *Schelòmo*, and of the Quintet—we find the travail which has seized upon the contemporary musical world, tormented by the exigencies of a style sought but never found, by the incapacity to free itself from the dross of a practical sense materialized by criticism and controversy. The mechanical-organic objectivism and the 'neo-objectivism' of the modern classicists' bold affirmations of a formal will, and also the outcome of critical acts arbitrarily separated from their logical and theoretical roots, and transplanted as a work of art, are all these. Because of this inborn vice they can never become a true idiom. The theoretical nature of objective experience, artificially translated into action, ends by altering and impeding the natural course of the æsthetic procedure, and by causing a coagulation of notions which hinder its becoming anything intelligible. The formal scheme reproduced in contradiction to its own nature cannot but create a disparity between its value and the causes which produced it. It is this dualism which undermines the so-called neo-classicism of Stravinsky.

Nor does artistic nationalism, which in practice and in theory influences so many to-day, appear in respect of the work of art to have a purer constitution. The theoretical process of nationalism is also fed by other than æsthetic factors; it is a token of voluntary acts in which exist elements of various natures. The present agitation about classicism and romanticism (always loosely used terms) is no passport to the domain of art; nor have the prophets (often dishonest, like the ancient oracles), who reckon the course of stylistic developments, found the secret. The music of the true Bloch—not the spurious Bloch of the *Concerto Grosso* and of the Suite *America*—possesses also this quality: that he realizes

himself in an atmosphere which stands well above the sensualistic and intellectual one which gives so much to do to the pseudo-critical verbosity of contemporary critics. Bloch is all things in his music, good, bad, and indifferent. He remains himself in spite of the rough and obscure and ill-balanced elements of his nature; in spite of his abruptness, his often ill-shaped form; he is still himself in the sharp contrasts which break the enchantment of the poetic vision. Doubtless, like so many of his contemporaries, Bloch reveals the disease of our century—the difficulty which personal emotion finds in expressing itself, the unbalanced realization, and irreconcilable disparity between being and doing. But he has to his credit a powerful and intimate sense of music, and a total absence of technical prejudices.

When we see Stravinsky, who could have been a typical example of sensitive, primitive powers, chill his musical sensibilities in clumsy criticism, and leave the wild impulses of his temperament for the academic state of passive production, the theoretical absenteeism of Bloch seems well worth studying. Even if in his almost insignificant *Concerto Grosso* he conceded something to the new neo-classical formalism, there is no doubt that the essential in his music tends towards an intuitive vivacity which has nothing in it of rhetoric. On the credit side also enter the originality and power of his form—even if overladen with excitement, seeming at times to lack definition—and a grandiose, virgin vision, nourished with history which has gone through the filter of pure lyricism. His song moves with the plasticity of a classical metre, in its cæsuras, in the elastic bending of the melodic arc, in the alternating delays and accelerations of the measure. It is a song which truly becomes a speech; but a speech in the spirit of sounds—neither verbal nor syllabic. It is a declamation which has nothing in common with the facile recitation

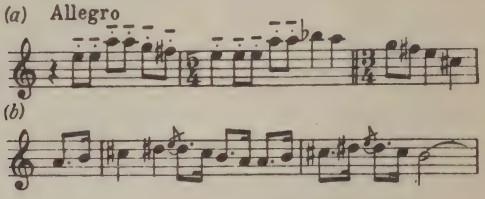
so commonly used in the *plat du jour* of to-day, where all the composer's task is to reproduce tamely a recitation in words with a recitation in sound. The musical declamation of Bloch is a lyrical state of mind in terms of music. Recitation is not with him the metrical mechanics of ordered syllables, but a lyrical attitude re-created in terms of sound. It is a poet who speaks—not poet from the idiom he employs, but from the essential fact of being a poet.

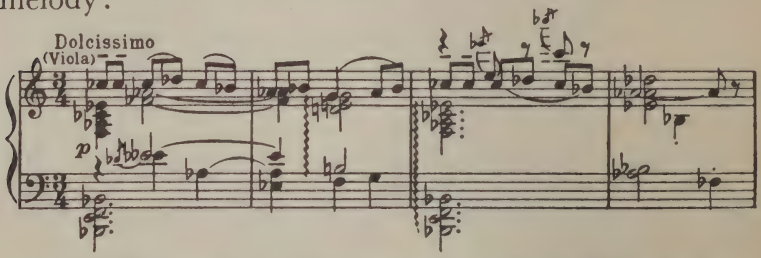
Just as in his greater works Bloch's style overcomes the mechanical procedure of the scheme, so he idealizes lyrically the singing instinct of the race. If he calls a glowing piece like *Schelòmo* a rhapsody, this fact does not prevent him from writing an organic work perfectly harmonious in the relation of the parts to the whole. The word 'rhapsody' must not be misunderstood. It must not be taken in the common sense of a medley of popular songs, but with a subjective meaning—almost like the Homeric poems: a narrative changing in various moments of the contents under the effect of direct and immediate experience. *Schelòmo*, a Jewish rhapsody, is not a collection of traditional songs, varied in more or less elaborate translation, but a creation of symphonic moments grown out of original melodic grounds. The national paradigm is in the spirit. It is embodied in tone, accent, it directs the feeling of the poet, it determines melody and tone, but it does not take the place of a prearranged plan. Between the finished work of art and the colour of a traditional music there is no *meatus* of philological interruption.

The musician has found the Hebrew melodies in the archives of his soul, and has given them the shape of his own being, fed by the spirit of the Psalms. And from this point of view all Bloch's music is a rhapsody. Even if we wished to do so, it would be very difficult to detect in the melodic repertory of the *Diaspora* the

original Hebraic elements and separate them from those adapted and transformed by the contact with Hellenism and Western civilization. He takes instinctively from Hebraic melody the tetrachordal characters which give musical individuality the intonations of the Bible.

His melodies tend towards these modes when they are inspired by a popular vivacity, as:



and when the song evolves in a broad and flexible melody:

The tetrachordal nature of harmonic texture is in agreement with the tendency of the modern musician to shake himself free from the unilateral major and minor modes. He passes beyond the domain of the octave, not by means of the dissonant clashes of atonality, but by a multiplicity of modes. The whole suggestion of his harmony lies in the various functions of the semitone. The modal richness—the cause of the great productivity of chords, and of the multiplicity of the vertical relations—springs essentially from this.

While French impressionism has derived from con-

temporary Russia and the East the suggestions of a musical art richer in colour and modal relations, Bloch goes back to the historic and traditional East. His Judaism meets the Hellenic spirit, and the vision of an ideal contact between the Asiatic East and the European East—a vision felt first in bringing the Hellenic nearer to the Jewish myth—is consolidated in the field of harmonic technique.

ARTHUR HONEGGER

Born Le Havre, 1892, of Swiss parents. Studied for two years at the Zürich Conservatoire, and later under Gédalge and Widor in Paris; also studied conducting under Vincent d'Indy. A member of the Parisian group of musicians known as 'Les Six'.

Principal Compositions

Sonata for violin and pianoforte. 1916.
String Quartet. 1917.
Le Chant de Nigamon. For orchestra. 1917.
Prelude, *Aglavaine et Sélysette.* 1917.
Incidental music to *Le-Dit des Jeux du Monde.* Produced at the Vieux Colombier Theatre in Paris in 1918.
Sonata for violin and pianoforte. 1919.
Incidental music to Max Jacob's *La Mort de St. Alméenne.* 1919.
Sonata for viola and pianoforte. 1920.
Sonata for 'cello and pianoforte. 1920.
Pastorale d'Été. For small orchestra. 1920.
Vérité et Mensonge. Ballet music. 1920.
Horace Victorieux. A 'mimed symphony'. 1921.
Le Roi David. Oratorio on a play by René Morax, produced Mézières, Switzerland, 1921.
Incidental music for André Gide's *Saul.* 1922.
Pacific 231. For orchestra. 1924.
Judith. Opera. 1924.
Rugby. For orchestra.
Amphion. Ballet. 1930.

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Arthur Honegger

ARTHUR HONEGGER

THERE are many sides to Honegger as an artist; but the best of his many aspects is the lyrical one—sometimes instinct with joy and praise, sometimes touched with a melancholy that expresses itself in songs of winged sweetness. The vivid score of *King David* is steeped in the poignancy of a racial, a national heart-cry. The same motive kindles the frenzied vocalism of *Judith.* Honegger in this mood is a poet of the human voice raised in song, the magician who calls forth ancient modes from the chasm of tradition. In the two operas named he has found in the religious exaltation of his soul the key of enchantment and redemption.

King David glows with a collective lyric impulse—with the voice of a nation raised in adoration of the Divinity. It is doubtful whether the reduction to cantata form, with a spoken narrative, aids or detracts from the organic structure and seriousness of the work; but there is a rough strength in this music, fired, as it is, by an overwhelming genius for choral writing.

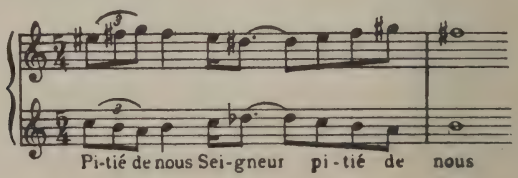
Towards the end of the last century choralism found itself confronted by a parting of the ways between the schools and the theatre. On the one hand, composers of a certain class could only understand a chorus as an exercise in four parts—a demonstration in counterpoint, whose essence and meaning were long ago forgotten, and which, conventionalized and exhausted, had been reduced to a scholastic bravura. In vain had Richard Wagner quickened the choral parts of *Parsifal* with the divine beauty of the Christian rite. To write for chorus meant, certainly, taking trouble, but not in order to

obtain fine effects; it meant proving the composer's purely academic ability. Finally, to say that any one was skilled in counterpoint came to imply that he was a pedant and a doctrinaire.

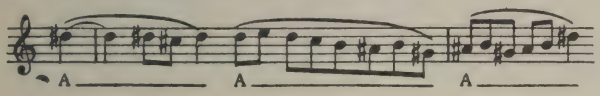
At the other extremity was the theatre, whose critical advocates were treated with about as much consideration as the stage hands. It brought forth melodramas of violent realism or serio-comic dramas about historic personages, at which the choir's function was to sing plain homophonies, to shrill sustained top notes, or to murmur with closed lips—effects which all stank of a decrepit theatrical tradition. With the new century the spirit of art turned towards a more intimate choralism, and in Italy, Alfano in the 'Vocero' in *The Shadow of Don Juan*, and Pizzetti in the threnody of *Phædra*, blazed the trail for reform.

The youthful Honegger had thus ready to hand a choral technique already freed from scholastic pedantries, and probably *Le Martyre de St. Sebastien* made a deep impression on him. The 'collective' vocalism which in *King David* is a purely choral experience, becomes, in *Judith*, more individualized. (And with greater profit, for in *Judith* we find at last one character of predominating importance, Judith herself.) The essential character of the drama is clear from the start, when the Jewish women utter their lamentations, with which the voice of Judith is mingled with the strength and clarity of formal counterpoint. ('Assour vous tient dans son étou . . . va préparer mes parures de fête.')

The women's prayer



is essentially modal—as generally happens in Honegger's best vocalization. It ends by practically ridding itself of the word-matter in order to express itself in a plastic melody. The melodic line becomes not merely a flowery decoration, but pure music, which has absorbed into itself the sentiment of the written word:



('Oh Bethulie, Bethulie abandonnée, nous te tendons les mains et nous pleurons, Seigneur.') This is a prayer with outstretched hands, in which the feeling of desolation wells up in a wave of pure song.[1]

The distinctive personality of Judith is evident, at first, when her own grief stands out from the sorrow of the crowd; and when in the second act at the meeting with Holophernes her feminine charm is reflected even in the fierce countenance of her adversary. All this is gathered and multiplied into instrumental arabesques [2] that elaborate an insinuating theme. The savage speech of the barbaric conqueror, heated by lust, becomes almost gentle under the influence of the woman,[3] while in her own soul—first as a memory from afar, then overwhelmingly—the keynote of her whole existence—rises again the plaintive motif of the Jewish lament.

The tragic scene is concluded in a representation of terrible simplicity. There are no savage screams, no outbursts of impetuous voices. A beheading scene like that of Holophernes might have been the cause (in the theatre) of heaven knows what orchestral hurricane. Here there is nothing of the kind. The pace of the action is given by a monotonous and symmetric motion interrupted by modal inserts which give the impression

[1] *De la maison que bâtirent nos pères.* Ed. Senart, for voice and pianoforte, pp. 20 and 21.

[2] Op. cit., p. 46 et seq.

[3] Op. cit., p. 54.

of a lament. Judith is absent; only the maid appears, and her voice as if in pain suggests cruel anxiety. ('Lentement le temps coule comme le sang d'une blessure ouverte.') [1]

The movement becomes more weighty; it is elaborated by the string instruments, and culminates in a moment of tearing sonority, so that it seems as if lightning was blazing across the soul's sky. At last Judith comes forth with her red burden and a weapon in her hand. The music is stripped to a frozen simplicity; there is a very short dialogue between Judith and the maid. An unseen sentry shouts the challenge. 'Les femmes d'Israël vont à la source' is the tranquil answer of Judith. A moment ago she had killed Holophernes.

The choruses of war and exultation in the third act belong to the best of Honegger's work, and take their place by the side of the best pages of *King David*. Outstanding moments are the very lovely episode, 'Comme le jour d'été . . .', the triumphal song, 'Elle ôta sa robe de veuve', and the hosannas in the final apotheosis, 'Gloire au Dieu tout-puissant'.

But there is another side to Honegger's character. He can become a composer who resents the burden imposed by good technique, who looks upon ingenuity as an end in itself, and who finds pleasure in building, stone by stone, an edifice made up of the fragments left by past generations of craftsmen. His score becomes so learned, so close in texture that in looking at it we open our eyes wide in admiration, and even on the concert platform it still suggests the hand of a master. But what is the psychological depth of this combination of sound, how far will it go, with its apparatus of objective sonorities, with its counterpoint insinuated between clumsy and obscure harmonies? We shall not need to wait for the verdict of posterity for an answer. The

[1] Op. cit., p. 63.

document is at hand to give it—*Horace Victorieux*, the 'mimed symphony'. This work of Honegger's is neither symphony nor miming—only a tangled score reminiscent of Strauss, alive with that 'professional' spirit which goes far beyond the artistic spirit. Yet *Horace Victorieux* is, nevertheless, a work of great musical skill which, if it fails in many respects, is still eminently instructive. But the erudition of the score is not matched by experience of life. Its technical mastery remains isolated among the concert of spiritual forces, and therein lies its failure.

In this work Honegger's whole creative faculty is centred in the single fact of a special technique. Now music, like all other arts—like every act of life—derives its value from being the expression of a spiritual summing up—a single moment, lived profoundly in an historical sense. History, to the artist, means essentially an expression of life as it is, united to its *raison d'être*. In symphonic music, and especially in *Horace Victorieux*, we find Honegger no longer portraying the sorrowful Jewish soul; we find a technician, a disciple of Strauss, who essays everything from huge choreographic pictures like *Le Combat*, to the tortured, magniloquent and laboured *Camille et Curiace*.[1] One would say of such music that the colour takes precedence of the idea; not (as was the case with the impressionists) colour which has become the central motif of expression, but colour which merely approximates to the musical construction. In *Pacific 231* (which, unlike the insignificant *Rugby*, is an admirable score) Honegger does not succeed in delimiting his technical mastery. He falls between lyricism and onomatopœia. And if the latter can please us, it is because of its intention rather than its achievement. As mere onomatopœia *Pacific 231* is too well-defined musically; for it starts from essentially

[1] *Horace Victorieux*—orchestral score. Ed. Senart, pp. 2–16.

symphonic and musical thematic material, and it never reaches a synthesis of irrelevant sounds that could be taken to represent the sonorous puff of an engine. All this musical virtuosity represents elements not deep enough, too weak and embryonic to rise to lyrical expression, and produce the state of mind which can *translate* the shiver of machinery tearing through space. Honegger's engine is too earth-bound to leap forward —and we receive from it the identical impression which we experience in looking at certain pictures. We gather at once from the drawing that the intention of the painter is to represent a machine in motion, but the motion does not materialize properly, and the figure remains motionless on the canvas. The painter meant to express his attitude towards a scene of movement, but he has had recourse to realistic means which do not even give the full objective reality. He is left half-way between a movement which does not take place and a sentiment which is not realized.

This failing is still worse in Honegger's chamber music, excepting the Quartet and the Sonata for violin and pianoforte, which fail to attain even to the most modest personal idiom, but to work such as the Concertino for pianoforte and orchestra, which is in some ways successful. Here we see clearly the lack of musical orientation in Honegger's work. He is marooned between two schools—that of Debussy with its sweet and evanescent harmonies, and that of Stravinsky with its tenacious, omnipresent, and brutal stylization. In the first movement we find a certain relation between cacophony and melody—a geometrical melody in strata placed the one above the other, broken by crevasses of syncopation and harmonized monstrosities. In the second movement the melodic line is a very exotic growth, that smells sweet but cloying.

But in the third movement the scene changes, and all

pretence of seriousness is thrown to the winds. We are suddenly confronted by an orchestra which tries to be taken for a band of nigger minstrels; but we know at once that here are no real niggers—only whites with blackened faces. Trumpets and trombones (artificially hoarse through being muted) buffet us with their syncopated patter. The strings beat time with the bow while a sensual melody tries to make itself heard, succeeding only with considerable difficulty. This dance rhythm with its implacable literal insistence on its fundamental structure is distinctly monotonous.

The Concertino, within the limits of discreet and four-square form, does not fail in its lively spirit of common sense, and is able to arouse interest in the listener. But it never really steps beyond that sense of objective reality which is the bane of Honegger's symphonic music.

Take away from him the human voice—especially in the form of a chorus—and Honegger is lost. Deprive him of the opportunity to express himself in those flourishes which tend towards the sadness of eternal sorrow, or point vaguely heavenwards: and he ends in mere mannerism. He is labouring to use up his musical fancy in the search for harmonious idioms—he is the mechanician of chords which build one wall of sound over another, sustained with massive counterpoint. Perhaps this is what he meant when he spoke of the 'honest workman' in the brief dedication which prefaces *Antigone*. He is a child of his age, blinded by that naturalistic sense of objectivity which pervades the modern world of music. From the point of view of intrinsic musical virtue Honegger is an inferior composer: the musician in him is inferior to the artist. He is not a musician of the Hindemith order, who can arouse interest and evoke expression from the mere play of sound; he is rather an artist who needs the stimulus of a serious motif of inspiration in order to translate and

represent it in music. Hindemith began by trifling with sound in the manner of a professor who jests about his trade; he was indifferent, mechanical, and so irrelevant that on a first hearing the listener felt irritated and almost insulted. But when the intellectual game took hold of him, then almost unconsciously his ardour grew, and he began to probe into the soul of things.

Honegger, on the other hand, needs explicit inner motifs founded on the lyrical aptitude of his fancy; he merely pretends to be coldly intellectual and impartial. At best he can never rid himself of a certain pleasing, discursive grace, which however lacks any roots in a true idiom, like the theatrical music of 'Un Miracle de Notre Dame' (*L'Impératrice aux Rochers*); more often (as in his chamber music and the *Chant de Joie*) his emptiness and presumption are quite insupportable. This mere anthology of the most salient voices of his own day, this diving into the waters of objectivism and allowing the current to carry him forward—these are all in vain. He can never quite divest himself of sentiment. Accordingly, he proceeds by affectedly angular and geometrical paths, and, anxious to acquire a style at all costs, comes to resemble some bastard creature born of the monstrous embraces of the satyr Stravinsky with the soft and intoxicating Muse of Ravel.

With *Antigone* Honegger fell into the snare presented by the purely exterior and conventional problems of opera. He began naturally, as has happened to young composers for centuries, by questioning the relation of music and words. He paused to note the phenomena of the accentuation of words in relation to diction in song, and bound himself to limitations and rules which he himself formulated, drawing up a rule of conduct for his progress—as if the elements of opera were pre-ordained and fatally immutable! It has happened to him—the last-comer to join in the dispute over useless

theories—to mistake the object for the idea and to centre his attention on technical elements as seen not from inside but from outside. The theory of opera has, ever since the genesis of opera began, followed this crooked path; an exterior problem was made out of what is essentially an interior one. 'Animus est qua indimus, anima est qua cogitamus.'

Thus arose the equivocal situation that has entangled composers since opera began, and will continue to entangle them until they understand better their true office. Opera cannot be considered as intrinsically different from any other art form, and since it is a part of the greater entity of music it should never concern itself substantially with other preoccupations than those of music. Having fixed the problem in this elementary form, we have next to establish what we mean by music. Now, if music to be articulate needs suitable instruments, and if musical instruments (from the human voice to the big drum) are those we know, there is no justification for regarding words when they are sung as essentially dramatic rather than musical. And we become no less exclusive and unreasonable when we make of the singing articulation of the word the central problem of this artistic creation, and focus our whole attention on that point. The word—here is the Gordian knot of opera, the starting-point of all misunderstanding, the source of all aberration. The word is a living symbol of grammatical empiricism which for centuries has held the musician under its yoke. The word, with all the natural charm of its musical quality latent in it, has emptied the composer of his artistic essence, and reduced him to the dry husk of a formalist. These are the preoccupations which beset Honegger in writing *Antigone*. He confesses it himself; in his own words:

1. Envelopper le drame d'une construction symphonique serrée sans en alourdir le mouvement.

2. Remplacer le récitatif par une écriture vocale mélodique ne consistant pas en tenues sur les notes élevées (ce qui rend toujours le texte incompréhensible) ou en lignes purement instrumentales; mais au contraire en cherchant une ligne mélodique crée par le mot lui-même, par sa plastique propre destinée à en accuser le contour et en augmenter le relief.

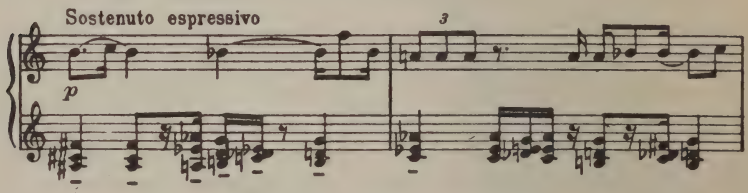
3. Chercher l'accentation juste principalement dans les consonnes d'attaque en opposition à la prosodie conventionelle qui les traite en anacrouses.

The mentality these words reveal is in contradiction with the spirit of the 'opera of music'. It is a mentality derived from external observation, which leads directly to a confusion between the physical sense of music and the general concept of music. The aspects of music are countless—of music as the human spirit in its effort to understand and express itself; as the speech of the individual which his experiences of life fashion in sound and movement. In the creation of all music there go—as the physical condition—the factors of vibration and movement, but elaborated by and transmitted through the 'reflex action' of culture and the consciousness of an historical continuity. The spirit of the musician becomes creative only when it can maintain in an ideal fusion its personal individuality along with the historic universality of which it is both a product and a function. Between the music of nature and the music of the individual creative spirit lies a radical difference; it is a grave error to study the methods of individual creation (merely following what has happened previously) without working out the data in the factors which determine and are a condition of the artistic spirit. It is as if a painter in his work were to make anatomy, botany, and geography the conclusive aim of his technique—aiming only at studying those effects he has learnt from nature, and forgetful of his essential function as a creator of new images. Yet this is exactly what has happened to musicians who have instinctively

grasped at the innate musical quality of words, and made this problem their chief burden, forgetting that the exterior musical quality of words is important as a technical, or mechanical condition; that the word is interesting in music for its meaning, not for its articulation: for its significance, not for its sound; that it must be translated, immersed in the world of a new musical creation, rather than mirrored in sounds through the physical and acoustical assimilation of verbal phonetics.

We need not retrace the verbal profile of *Casta Diva*, or of the Trio in *William Tell*, or in Isolde's *Liebestod*, where the word has poured out its spirit into the music, and has been drowned in the sea of melodic and symphonic emotion. The problems which beset Honegger in the composition of *Antigone* were bound to lead to its failure as a work of art. They actually cause him to forget the immortal drama of brotherly love in centring his attention on reproducing in a vital shape the true dynamics of the word—as if the significance of the drama came from the written word and not from the music. And it happened to him—as to all musicians who work themselves into a grammatical state of mind —to 'verbalize' his music, instead of 'musicalizing' his words. Confronted by one of the most powerful tragedies of the human spirit, he, an artist, remains as frigid as a philologist. He pulverizes the text with laboured and incomprehensible declamation, in spite of the petty expedient of accentuating the consonant, in the attack. And the very word on which so much care has been expended in the end betrays him, since he has deformed it by uprooting it from the usage which created it. One should be careful in attacking convention. There are, it is true, conventions which are stupid, but for the most part conventions are practical things, rooted in well-founded and traditional experiences

which correspond perfectly to a true definition of reality. Now, prosody may be conventional, but that does not invalidate its right to exist. Honegger, because he is determined to uphold the especial quality of the word above everything, turns the laws of conventional prosody upside down, and writes indefinite music which is reduced to playing the part of a superficial trimming —a sort of wrapping for the word; music so unmusical and particularized that it fits only the French text, rendering it impossible to translate into other tongues. To put the finishing touch to these declamatory pyrotechnics he has surrounded them with an indefinable orchestral halo throughout the first seven scenes.

We have to wait till the eighth scene before hearing a piece of good music; the sad spectacle of Antigone going to the scaffold has finally shaken the hardened heart of the dramatic theorist. The march to the scaffold of the sublime sister is accompanied by a lament rich in languorous chromaticism:

Immediately afterwards begins once more the artificial declamation which blends painfully with the rich counterpoint of the lament; but this is not final, for Honegger's sanguine temperament so long compressed and frustrated, has long awaited its revenge. It comes with the radiant outburst of the choral invocation to Dionysus—a vehement page in which the musician, after having conquered the obstacles of his intellectual blunders, lets himself go in one of those demoniac orgies which are part and parcel of his choral spirit.

Although the modal quality of the song is not of strictly racial or national inspiration (as *King David* or *Judith*), yet the musical quality of this piece rests in a thickly-woven rhythm ever growing in force and splendour. The orchestra asserts its will without wavering and develops its down-shearing theme distributed among three tonal planes. The unison of the chorus cuts like rays of light through the fluctuating mass of sound, so explosive, and yet clear-cut and symmetrical. Counterpoints and imitations ever grow more close and obstinate; they beat out in the hymn that triumphal admiration which is reinforced by every device of rhythm, melody, and polytonality. Here Honegger is completely at home; he follows his inclination, unhindered by the literary tragedy of *Antigone*, to which nothing but a certain sense of professional adventure had drawn him in the first place. Sophocles with his world of heroes, of mourning and fatality—his conception of humanity, infinitely uplifting and heroically sublime—has left Honegger, as he found him, in a state of supine and glacial indifference. And if the admirable interlude of the Cadmean nymph repays us partly for our disappointment in an unsatisfactory work of art, it is no justification for absolving Honegger from the crime of sinning against art and, indeed, against himself—since he is, after all, an artist. For to have failed in the case of a tragedy like the Sophoclean *Antigone* means not only a personal failure, but also the artistic guilt of profaning a masterpiece.

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN MUSIC

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN MUSIC

It does not require unusual powers of insight to understand the condition of American music to-day. There is a strong and energetic movement, followed by a vast number of musicians, towards what can only be described as 'up-to-dateness'. The crowd of artists in North America is thick and heterogeneous, but not undistinguished: they come from every quarter of the globe, and the only thing they share is a desire for self-expression and self-knowledge. They are united in a boundless curiosity about their own capabilities—wrestling with internal problems that are not susceptible of any easy explanation.

Daniel G. Mason, in an essay, has made several observations on American music which are intelligent and contain a good deal of truth.[1] His conclusions may be summarized as follows: American music is a branch of the great European tree, but it has already produced sufficient fruits to deserve study on its own merits. No doubt the work even of the best American composers leaves something to be desired, 'for they labour under great impediments, chiefly psychological'—but they have, nevertheless, produced a music of their own, and a music which is something more than jazz. What principally hinders them is the many-sidedness of the traditions whose weight they bear. This *mélange* of opposing traditions is a peculiarity of all American artistic life.

[1] Daniel G. Mason, *The Dilemma of American Music*. Macmillan, New York, 1928.

Mr. Mason writes simply, putting down his observations with practical common sense, and without any preoccupation with abstract theory. None the less, almost without realizing it, he touches upon a problem which is both delicate and complex—that of tradition in a work of art; although in point of fact he confuses tradition as a sense of the past with the ordinary external stimuli which affect a work. This problem cannot be stated without first making a digression.

Attention is called by Mr. Mason to the importance of traditional values in artistic development—how, for instance, the style of Bach derives from his predecessors, how impossible it is to conceive of Beethoven unrelated to Haydn and Mozart, of Wagner without Weber and Meyerbeer (the last is perhaps not a very happy example), how the germ of Schubert and Schumann can be found in Beethoven: and in these two lies the promise of Brahms and César Franck. It is unnecessary to read into Mr. Mason's thesis a mechanical 'evolutionary' outlook; it merely visualizes tradition as the inherited qualities of the mind which control and fertilize every individual's creative achievements.

With a similar end in view Weissmann has pertinently put the question of what Mozart would have become had he been born in the South Sea Islands. At most he might have extended to seven the three or four notes of the native scale, and composed melodies perhaps a little more complicated than the traditional ones; but certainly he would have been as incapable of writing symphonies and sonatas as Archimedes of building a dynamo or a locomotive. These suggestions are amusing and they can be brought to a more serious plane by reflecting that Mozart, if he had not been born when and where he was, would not have been Mozart, but a totally different individual; and he would not have added any notes to the primitive scale, just as Archi-

medes in order to experiment with electrical machines would have to be born in a later age, and thus not be Archimedes at all.

To return to American music, one positive fact emerges from the briefest survey: that these composers are struggling in a morass of ill-defined traditions, and that not one of them seems to be even within range of lifting himself head and shoulders above the rest. The lesson to be drawn is that there is as yet no American genius in music. If it existed its light would have shone even in the darkest surroundings: its voice would have proclaimed that it was one with its tradition. But the legitimacy of this contention is only clear if tradition —the living influence of history—can influence the appearance or non-appearance of a man of genius. Genius is such an essentially creative force that it gives to existing conditions the appearance of being only a facet of itself; it needs no help, no support, since it is a spark of what is universal and divine. But what is universal and divine is not a prize to be won in a lottery, nor does genius appear by mere chance, since it is a product of those mysterious forces which produce and transcend reality.

American music, the last-born of the artistic world, was suckled by Germany. It imbibed good milk, and grew healthy, but it never acquired the independent life it should have done. The forty years from 1850 to 1890 were spent in this process of nursing. John Knowles Paine followed the tracks of Schumann and Mendelssohn, and in turn was imitated by Arthur Foote and George W. Chadwick. Henry Holden Huss, Arthur Whiting, and Horatio Parker were pupils and followers of Rheinberger—who himself was only a musician at second-hand. MacDowell was a descendant of Schumann, spoiled by contact with Joachim Raff.

Then came the turn of French influence. Debussy and Ravel had their own followers—among them Edward Burlingham Hill, John Alden Carpenter, and C. M. Loeffler. Until then the control of Europe over America had been restrained; it was passive, but directed to a logical end. What followed from this time onward was chaos; and at the time when commercial interests began to be mingled with the purely artistic relationship, the former took control. The European tendencies, both cultural and national, were assimilated into America without discrimination. The most wildly dissimilar tendencies were levelled by the great standard of the dollar. What in Europe were bitter quarrels and opposing schools became reconciled across the Atlantic in the general disorder of thought. Artists of unknown origin quickly found a warm reception, needing only to be preceded by a little discussion and 'boosting' to win complete success. Thus the European musical movement, with the sharp edges of national character rubbed off, became completely international in America.

Even before the war America, showering gold at the foot of the great singers—of any virtuoso—had begun to be the Land of Plenty for all musicians. After the war, with the closer economic contacts rendered inevitable by it, Europe became a veritable musical bazaar, in which America bought anything that caught her fancy. No longer was it merely the singers and other virtuosi of the concert platform who found a welcome and a fortune across the Atlantic, but every musical personality, from the most important to the veriest charlatan. The ears of American audiences drank everything in: the barbarism of Russia, from Moussorgsky to Stravinsky; the Spanish exploitation of its own local colour; the new Anglo-Irish musical literature; the hysterical pantheism of Stravinsky, the

new pedantry of Max Reger and Schönberg, the *soi-disant* nationalism of every corner of Europe. Musical America absorbed all these curious European by-products as a wad of blotting-paper absorbs ink. If a plan of American music could be drawn, it would be seen to contain all the most awkward angles of European music from 1900 onward. The Russians are reflected in Leo Ornstein's wild orgies of sound, and in the nightmare imitations of Scriabin written by Dane Rudhyar. The school of Schönberg (if we can call it a school) is represented by Adolph Weiss. Horatio Parker is an Americanized César Franck; and Deems Taylor is one of those international commercial travellers of art who always play the big drum and find that it pays to advertise.

However, America has its purely native idiom—jazz. Orthodox Americans dislike hearing this stated, but it is the truth. For jazz has become a popular success, ousting the faded cabaret-music and musical-comedy tunes that held sway before. It remains something of a freak, nevertheless. It is too vague an idiom to be valuable: it is a means of expression, but not a means of self-expression. Jazz, so comparatively recent a growth, has already established itself as a popular tradition — an anonymous and primeval influence, a symptom of a consciousness, but not of reality; it has the stamp of one individual psychology, but not of a will to live, and still less of the artistic fruition of such a will.

This is largely the reason why modern American music gains nothing from jazz. Jazz cannot be totally ignored; it is a fact, startlingly real and concrete. But in its essentially stereotyped and communal nature every element of personal character is necessarily lost. It is a musical background, a mere convention of gesture, a vent for emotion, a gramophone ceaselessly

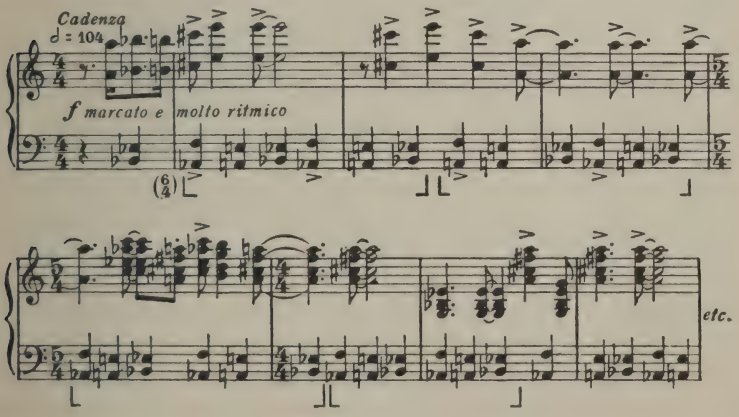
reiterating the oldest of themes—but never individual, or a vehicle for expression of an original nature. It is an interweaving of tonal and physical elements, in which there is no room for the strivings and aspirations of the spirit. All the experience of jazz, with all its new phenomena in sound and rhythm, has failed to produce a single original composer.

A solitary specimen of interest is to be found in the ballet *Skyscrapers*, by John Alden Carpenter.[1] A key to the modern American musical outlook may be found in the title and sub-title—*Skyscrapers, a ballet of modern American life*. The underlying idea is to reflect in music the primeval rhythmic movement of American life; to snatch from the social reality its vital essence, the inner movement, and to re-create it in sound, while retaining the forms of ordinary life. It is a difficult task, but one which does hold the possibility of a truly new work of art. Carpenter takes the active principles of American life to-day as consisting of two opposed elements: work and play. Work is the constructive side of action; play the many-sided aspects of life other than constructive—individual and collective. The composer's attempt is a valiant one, but it is no more than an attempt, and it is finally shipwrecked upon the reef of realism. He can do no better than to pass the creations of his imagination (rhythmic images of American life, as they might be called) through the sieve of a Russian and French technique of the ballet; with the result that his idea does not get an adequate interpretation, but is covered by a mixture of two different styles. *Skyscrapers* is an ingenuous work, lively and full of rhythmic energy, but it has a duplicate background, fitted roughly into the conventional rhetorical framework of the French-Russian ballet of to-day with its symbolical gestures and varied choreography. It has music which sparkles,

[1] Schirmer, New York, 1926.

but the genuine American element is modelled by a European-acquired technique smacking of Ravel and Stravinsky.

If any one among American musicians is entitled to boast of having infused a genuine individuality into the idiom of jazz it is Aaron Copland. The iron grip of jazz is softened in his music to a natural handhold. He soaks himself in the rhythm and hammers it with a kind of desperate zeal. The Concerto for piano and orchestra [1] is, as far as can be judged from the printed score, a typical work; it includes all the characteristics upon which it is evident that the composer has set his heart and directed his efforts. The work is a despairing *pagliaccio* among compositions, who strings himself up to a wild gesture and sinks exhausted. The melodic expression is weak and essentially introductory or transitory in Copland's music, which only reaches its higher levels in its rhythm—dry, strident interjections, and violent zigzags of sound. The *cadenza* moves to a jazz rhythm which is probably unparalleled in the history of piano music:



[1] Cos Boss Press, Inc., 1929.

The publications of the Society for the Publication of American Music (Schirmer, New York), and of the New Music Society of California, are invaluable for any one who desires to realize what underlies the work of modern American composers. The first-named society's publications are of a more orthodox and mature type, with scholastic champions such as Stanley Smith and Albert Stoessel, than those of the latter, which are decisively, one might almost say desperately, *avant-garde*. The advanced movement is nationalist and highly extravagant in its nature, in opposition to the European tendencies of the more conventional composers.

Among American musicians a number may be mentioned who have a direct connection with some European school, and the result is even more obvious when the hybrid nature of their music is considered, with its utter lack of any sort of personality. There is no question of exhausting this list by recitation, but a few may be mentioned, such as Frederick Jacobi and Louis Grünberg. The first-named has published a String Quartet on American Indian themes (1924) which was played at one of the annual festivals of the International Contemporary Music Society at Zurich in 1926. It is a decorous work, whose technique is not really adequate to express the artist's real personality and ideas. It passes and leaves no mark upon the listener's mind; yet it has many pleasant features which proclaim a sound musical taste. The composer uses popular themes in a rhapsodic manner—but it is not a rhapsody experienced by himself. He transcribes elegantly, but puts in no new material of his own.

Louis Grünberg's symphonic poem, *The Enchanted Isle*,[1] is a score which possesses every quality—except that of musical invention. And European music has

[1] Juillard: Birchard, New York, 1930.

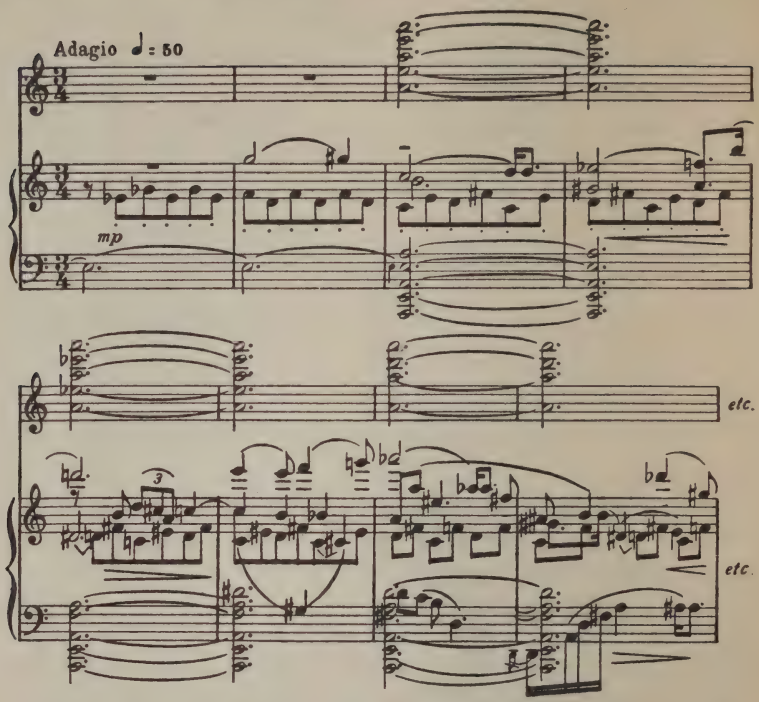
produced so many well-engineered scores that an orchestral museum like this work can have only a very limited interest for us.

A work out of the common is to be found in Arthur Shepherd's [1] *Triptych*, for soprano voice and string quartet, noteworthy for its fanciful and light-hearted writing for the strings, which blend firmly and expressively with the solo voice. Another is Emerson Whithorne's *Saturday's Child*, a setting for mezzo-soprano, tenor, and chamber orchestra of a poem by Countee Cullen.[2] But the poetry plays the same unkind trick on this composer as it has done to so many musicians of this age; the words refuse to link up with the musical line, and prevent it from becoming more than a series of episodes.

It is difficult to penetrate the spiritual background of American music while following any coherent plan of investigation. It is best to range up and down seeking a chance opportunity to hit on to an essential truth. There is no definitive line of conduct which can be traced among these musicians, no general ideal, not even a scholastic one; no doctrine to which more than one individual gives assent. They are in the power of any chimerical suggestion that may float across the Atlantic from Europe; or else they are throttled by their own lack of adequate expression, like Ives, or deformed and fanatical like Varèse and Ruggles.

Bernard Wagenaar, with a *Sinfonietta* for orchestra, wavers between Stravinsky and Schönberg; from Stravinsky he has learnt his dry tonality, his seeking after essential rhythm—from Schönberg that cynicism of technique which expressed itself in a tortured sinuosity of line. He is full of tricks of expression which distort a mock melody thus:

[1] Schirmer, New York, 1928. [2] Birchard, 1927.

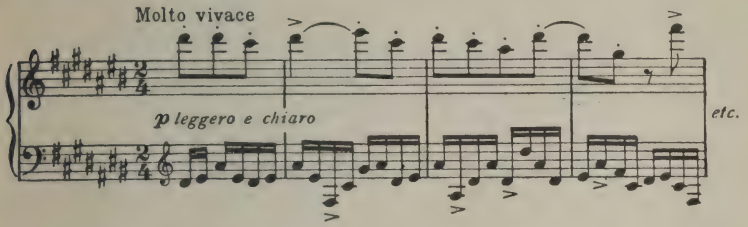


and of rhythms which spring up in a chromatic crudity devoid of reason or logic. The work is like a toy which works well on the slightest push, but stops the moment it is left untouched.

Amid such a coming and going of musicians Roger Sessions has certainly the merit of being a figure easily distinguished. His Sonata for pianoforte is a work which interests the player for technical reasons rather more than it does the listener for æsthetic ones.[1] The work is at moments rich in musical sensibility and clear-cut thought; its profile is shapely and firm—essentially masculine. The moments of rather languid melody (evident imitations of Chopin) are less attractive. There is only a washy flavour of real melody, as in a drink of

[1] Roger Sessions: Piano Sonata. Schott, 1931.

water out of a glass which last held strong wine. It is in the phases of its development, in its most muscular and sinewy aspects, that the work interests the listener—in the strength of the welding of the steely harmonies. A rhythmic structure like the one which follows, held up by solid beams of melody, gives an excellent impression of the quality of the work:



Unity is the quality most conspicuously lacking. Harshness and gentleness of tone follow each other in no logical sequence; there is no inevitable succession of moods. A fine passage is thus only admirable for its own sake—not as a limb of a greater body. Imagine a building constructed out of good, even beautiful, materials; but with valuable marbles and solid grey stone, mixed in such a way that their quality awakens no admiration but only disconcerts by its inappositeness—and you have an image of the work.

Another composer who should be borne in mind is Carlos Chávez, the author of the ballets *The New Fire* (1923), *Los Cuatro Soles* (1925–6), and *H. P., A Dance of Men and Machines* (1926), and of other vocal and instrumental works sufficient to indicate a fecundity noteworthy in a composer only born in 1899. Chávez is a primitive, but one cannot tell how far his primitivism is a true expression of his mental make-up, and how far a mere consequence of immaturity. His music is inspired by an imagination whose sources are the gramophone rather than the pure well of fancy. A more voluble and light-hearted work than the

Sonatina for violin and piano[1] could hardly be imagined.

In considering the most advanced school of American composers the first names which come to mind are those of Carl Ruggles and Charles E. Ives. The former, drowned in a mysticism which is illusory because founded on a purely physical delight in obscure harmonies, is in a vicious circle from which there is no escape. He takes for an original mental conception what, in fact, is no more than a mere acoustic image; he believes that he is creating a musical expression of this illusory metaphysic by his equivocal and tortuous idiom, his serpentine chromatics. Fancy, which does not grow naturally in his world, is cultivated by all the conventional means. The vagueness of his dreams leads him to an imagined height of ecstasy.[2] It is a fictitious imagery which is only successful in rhetoric: it is like the acoustic metaphysics of the older Schönberg—mere romantic interjections without any connecting thread of thought.

Charles E. Ives is a native of Danbury, Connecticut; he studied with Horatio Parker, and has written four symphonies, of which only the first is in the traditional form, and other music, including some composition, in quarter-tones. Ives is the champion of a kind of apocalyptic music; as though possessed by a demon, he plunges into a mystical exultation which would become utter nonsense with a different technique. But his are purely arm-chair experiences, a kind of scientific madness. Take, for instance, the score of the Fourth Symphony, which aspires to be a religious and spiritual crystallization of the spirit of New England.[3] If the fit tends to differentiate Charles Ruggles from others, to accentuate his individual characteristics, in Ives it takes

[1] *New Music*, July 1928.

[2] C. Ruggles, 'Men and Mountains', Symphonic Ensemble (*New Music*, October 1927); 'Portals' for full string orchestra (*New Music*, April 1930).

[3] Charles E. Ives, Fourth Symphony for large orchestra, published January 1929.

a more universal form—a witches' sabbath of the emotions, conceived and executed with frightful ferocity. It is coloured with a fanatic's cynical disregard of what is commonly accepted as good and reasonable. The score is wild and wonderful—a castle of dreams in the midst of a desolate countryside. Strauss's *Don Quixote* and Schönberg's *Pélleas et Mélisande* are mere 'prentice works in the study of horror and fantasy against this wild medley. Even in the printed score the despair of the metaphysician can be read into this music, this fantastic attempt to compress the universe into a few printed pages.

Edgar Varèse, on the other hand, is a realist fanatic. His music is a geometrical treatise on the art of making a noise. Sheer sound kindles in his work like an electric spark, and flies along the lines of his music's structure in every direction. The result is deafening, instead of illuminating the true construction of the composition as it is intended to do. This cubism in music is an old friend, visible in every movement of the *Octandre* for flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, and double-bass.[1] From this work onwards his development is on the same lines. At bottom Varèse is an instinctive soul who toys with sounds, moving and replacing them like a child with a box of bricks. It might be thought that he was a realist of noise, a student of squeaks, and bangs, and rumbles—a translator of everyday sounds into others of a particular content. But he has not enough power of synthesis to go thus far. He is only a child amusing himself by translating the realities of music into a diabolical arithmetic. The contrast between *ppp* and *fff* is his favourite 'ploy'. He loves to follow an infinitesimal sound with a terrific bellow. But the listener's alarm is confined to fearing for his ear-drums; it never penetrates the mind. For at heart Varèse is a timid experimenter. The material of

[1] Edgar Varèse, *Octandre*. Curwen, London, 1924.

sound which he twists and remodels is only what has come within the range of his personal experience; he is a mere physiocrat of music.

. . . . . .

It cannot, nevertheless, be denied that America is rich in musical thought. It is true that a culture which has too many aspects ends by being entirely negative; but the future is still undecided. There was in the past a particular danger—that in America the art of sound should eventually be limited to one special idiom of local colour, so that, as has happened in Spain already, the result would be America described in music rather than music written by Americans. This danger, which Mr. Mason observed, seems to have passed, if we except Chávez, whose Aztec imagery is his by right of birth, and Ives, who, however, suffocates the folk-lore of Melanesia under his enormous symphonic structures. Even the place of jazz in serious music has been obscured, as far as it may be taken to be the natural and original element in all American music. Copland has nevertheless been able to draw some benefit from it.

In general, the major stimuli have come from Europe. But there has been no real transfusion of minds—merely a number of economic and material contacts. European musicians exchanged their music for dollars, but they did not create a new school of music on the other side of the Atlantic by doing so. Tendencies, which in Europe were rapidly judged, condemned, and forgotten, in America became serious artistic movements. After the war European composers, like poor relations, trooped across the Atlantic; they received their money and offered in exchange artistic theories — generally damaged goods, which the Americans would have done better to refuse. There is sharp practice in music, as well as in trade.

INDEX

INDEX

A

Abos, Gerolamo, 63
Adler, 165
Ahna, Pauline de, 18
Albéniz, 64, 65, 69
Alfano, 224
Allan, Maud, 204
Andreiev, 39, 40, 87
Ansermet, Ernest, 39, 44, 45
Aquinas, 44
Archimedes, 240

B

Bach, 44, 48, 50, 80, 85, 86, 189, 190, 195, 201
Balzac, 147
Baudelaire, 6, 7, 118, 144, 145, 146, 148
Bax, Arnold, 171
Beethoven, 44, 123, 133, 134, 165, 178, 189, 240
Bekker, Paul, 10, 11
Berlioz, 24, 25, 109, 111, 113, 115
Bertrand, Louis, 149
Bliss, Arthur, 171
Bloch, Ernest, 205–19
——— Biographical summary, 204
——— Principal compositions, 204
Brahms, 22, 23, 109, 110, 111, 130, 240
Bruckner, 110, 112
Busoni, Ferruccio, 187–201
——— Biographical summary, 186
——— Principal compositions, 186
Byrd, 166

C

Cagliostro, 127, 190
Carpenter, John Alden, 242, 244
Cellini, Benvenuto, 88
Cervantes, 70
Chabrier, 145
Chadwick, George W., 241
Chávez, Carlos, 249, 252
Chopin, 51, 248
Clementi, 72
Colette, 159, 161
Copland, Aaron, 245, 252
Cullen, Countee, 247

D

d'Annunzio, 5, 128
Debussy, 5, 7, 8, 37, 46, 58, 65, 67, 77, 97, 116, 123, 124, 127, 128, 143, 144, 145, 207, 228, 242
Dent, Professor E. J., 165, 166, 168
d'Indy, Vincent, 222
Donizetti, 32
Dostoievsky, 39, 40
Dukas, 58
Dvořák, 130, 207

E

Elgar, Sir Edward, 165, 166, 168
Escobedo, Bartolomeo de, 62
Eximeno, 62

F

Falla, Manuel de, 59–74
——— Biographical summary, 58
——— Principal compositions, 58
Farinelli, 63
Faurè, Gabriel, 142
Foote, Arthur, 241

Franck, César, 174, 240, 243
Frederick the Great, 29
Froberger, 79

G

Garcia, Manuel, 63
Gédalge, 142, 222
George, Stefan, 115
Glazounov, 37
Goossens, 171
Granados, 64
Grieg, 7, 32, 150, 154
Grünberg, Louis, 246

H

Händel, 166
Hauer, Josef Matthias, 118, 119, 123
Haydn, 240
Hegel, 29
Hill, Edward Burlingham, 242
Hindemith, Paul, 77–94, 229, 230
——— Biographical summary, 76
——— Principal compositions, 76
Honegger, Arthur, 223–235
——— Biographical summary, 222
——— Principal compositions, 222
Huss, Henry Holden, 241
Huysmans, J.-K., 207

I

Ives, Charles E., 247, 250, 252

J

Jacobi, Frederick, 246
Jaques-Dalcroze, 204

K

Knorr, Ivan, 204
Kodály, Zoltán, 97–106
——— Biographical summary, 96
——— Principal compositions, 96
Kössler, Hans, 96

L

Ledesma, Mariano Rodriguez de, 63
Lehar, 33
Liszt, 22, 24, 25, 29, 127, 166, 214
Loeffler, C. M., 242

M

MacDowell, Edward, 241
Maeterlinck, 116
Mahler, 110, 112
Mallarmé, 148
Malthus, 31
Manuel, Roland, 149
Manzoni, 79
Marinetti, 148
Mason, Daniel G., 239, 240, 252
Massenet, 145
Mendelssohn, 166, 174, 241
Mendelssohn, Arnold, 76
Meyer, F. W., 18
Meyerbeer, 240
Miaskovski, 41
Moeran, Edward, 171
Moussorgski, 7, 32, 37, 97, 170, 242
Mozart, 24, 28, 30, 79, 153, 189, 240

N

Nietzsche, 200, 207
Nin, Joaquin, 63
Nohain, 157
Noskowski, 126

O

Ornstein, Leo, 243

P

Paine, John Knowles, 241
Palestrina, 59
Pareja, Ramis de, 62, 124
Parker, Horatio, 241, 243, 250
Parry, C. H. H., 164, 169
Pedrell, Felipe, 58, 63
Perez, Davide, 63
Pergolesi, 54

Picasso, 39
Pirandello, 88
Pizzetti, 224
Puccini, 145, 159
Purcell, 166

R

Raff, Joachim, 241
Rasse, F., 204
Ravel, Maurice, 58, 67, 77, 79, 134, 143–62, 230, 242, 245
——— Biographical summary, 142
——— Principal compositions, 142
Reger, Max, 7, 243
Rey, Louis, 204
Rheinberger, 241
Riemann, 23
Rimbaud, 143
Rimsky-Korsakoff, 36, 37
Rossini, 4, 111
Rudhyar, Dane, 243
Ruggles, Carl, 247, 250

S

Salazar, Adolfo, 27, 30, 64, 72, 73
Scarlatti, 63, 73
Schering, A., 9 *n.*, 114
Schloezer, Boris de, 44, 45, 130
Schönberg, Arnold, 109–24, 243, 247, 251
——— Biographical summary, 108
——— Principal compositions, 108
Schopenhauer, 111
Schubert, 240
Schumann, 51, 98, 111, 174, 240, 241
Schütz, 79
Scriabin, 37, 243
Sekles, Bernard, 76
Sessions, Roger, 248
Shaw, G. B., 165
Shepherd, Arthur, 247
Smith, Stanley, 246
Sophocles, 111
Stanford, C. V., 164, 169
Stein, 123
Stoessel, Albert, 246
Strauss, Richard, 20–34, 110, 128, 131, 207, 214, 227, 251
——— Biographical summary, 18
——— Principal compositions, 18
Stravinsky, Igor, 37–56, 72, 77, 110, 170, 215, 216, 228, 230, 242, 245, 247
——— Biographical summary, 36
——— Principal compositions, 36
Strobel, 11
Suarèz, 146
Szymanowski, Karol, 127–39
——— Biographical summary, 126
——— Principal compositions, 126

T

Tagore, Rabindranath, 137
Tallis, Thomas, 166
Taylor, Deems, 243
Terradellas, Domenico, 63
Toscanini, Arturo, 13
Tragó, José, 58
Trend, J. B., 62 *n.*, 65, 68, 69
Turina, 66

V

Varèse, Edgar, 247, 251
Vaughan Williams, Ralph, 165–83
——— Biographical details, 164
——— Principal compositions, 164
Verlaine, Paul, 156
Vicentino, Niccolo, 124
Victoria, Tomás Luis de, 62
Vivaldi, 178

W

Wagenaar, Bernard, 247
Wagner, Richard, 6, 22, 29, 98, 109, 111, 113, 115, 127, 174, 195, 201, 210, 223, 240
Walascek, 41
Walter, Benno, 18
Weber, 32, 98, 240
Weelkes, 166
Weiss, Adolph, 243
Weiss-Busoni, Anna, 186

Weissmann, Adolf, 12, 13, 64, 65, 240
Wellesz, 128, 129
Westphal, Kurt, 121
Whithorne, Emerson, 247
Whiting, Arthur, 241
Widor, 222
William II, 29
Wilbye, John, 166
Williams, Vaughan: *see* Vaughan Williams
Wood, Charles, 164
Wundt, 29

Y

Ysaye, 204

Z

Zemlinsky, 108
Zemlinsky, Mathilde, 108
Zola, 147
Zuloaga, 70

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